Ex Legis Regal. 1827

WOODSTOCK:

OR,

THE CAVALIER.

632

A TALE

OF THE

YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY, TALES OF THE CRUSADERS," &c.

He was a very perfect gentle Knight.
CHAUCER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

Stay—for the King has thrown his warder down.
Richard II.

The combatants whom we left engaged at the end of the last volume, made mutual passes at each other with apparently equal skill and courage. Charles had been too often in action, and too long a party as well as a victim to civil war, to find anything new or surprising in being obliged to defend himself with his own hands; and Everard had been distinguished, as well for his personal bravery, as for the other properties of

a commander. But the arrival of a third party prevented the tragic conclusion of a combat, in which the success of either party must have given him much cause for regretting his victory.

It was the old knight himself who arrived, mounted upon a forest pony, for the war and sequestration had left him no steed of a more dignified description. He thrust himself between the combatants, and commanded them on their lives to hold. So soon as a glance from one to the other had ascertained to him whom he had to deal with, he demanded, "Whether the devils of Woodstock whom folks talked about had got possession of them both, that they were tilting at each other within the verge of the royal liberties?—Let me tell both of you," he said, "that while old Henry Lee is at Woodstock, the immunities of the Park shall be maintained as much as if the King were still on the throne. None shall fight duellos here, excepting the stags in their seasons. Put up both of you, or I shall lug out as thirdsman, and prove perhaps the worse devil of the three!—As Will says—

> 'I'll so maul you and your toasting-irons,
> That you shall think the devil has come from hell.' "

The combatants desisted from their encounter, but stood looking at each other sullenly, as men do in such a situation, each unwilling to seem to desire peace more than the other, and averse therefore to be the first to sheathe his sword.

"Return your weapons, gentlemen, upon the spot," said the knight yet more peremptorily, "one and both of you, or you will have something to do with me I promise you. You may be thankful times are changed. I have known them such, that your insolence might have cost each of you your hand, if not redeemed with a round sum of money.—Nephew, if you do not mean to alienate me for ever, I command you to put up.—Master Kerneguy, you are my guest. I request of you not to do me the insult of remaining with your sword drawn, where it is my duty to see peace observed."

"I obey you, Sir Henry," said the King, sheathing his rapier—"I hardly indeed know wherefore I was assaulted by this gentleman. I assure you, none respects the King's person or privileges more than myself—though the devotion is somewhat out of fashion."

"We may find a place to meet, sir," replied Everard, "where neither the royal person nor privileges can be offended."

"Faith, very hardly, sir," said Charles, unable to suppress the rising jest—"I mean, the King has so few followers, that the loss of the least of them might be some small damage to him; but, risking all that, I will meet you wherever there is fair field for a poor cavalier to get off in safety, if he has the luck in fight."

Sir Henry Lee's first idea had been fixed upon the insult offered to the royal demesne; he now began to turn them towards the safety of his kinsman, and of the young royalist, as he deemed him. "Gentlemen," he said, "I must insist on this business being put to a final end. Nephew Markham, is this your return for my condescension in coming back to Woodstock on your warrant, that you should take an opportunity to cut the throat of my guest?"

"If you knew his purpose as well as I do,"—said Markham, and then paused, conscious that he might only incense his uncle without convincing him, as anything he might say of Kerneguy's

addresses to Alice was like to be imputed to his own jealous suspicions—he looked on the ground, therefore, and was silent.

"And you, Master Kerneguy," said Sir Henry, "can you give me any reason why you seek to take the life of this young man, in whom, though unhappily forgetful of his loyalty and duty, I must yet take some interest, as my nephew by affinity?"

"I was not aware the gentleman enjoyed that honour, which certainly would have protected him from my sword," answered Kerneguy. "But the quarrel is his; nor can I tell any reason why he fixed it upon me, unless it were the difference of our political opinions."

"You know the contrary," said Everard; "you know that I told you you were safe from me as a fugitive royalist—and your last words showed you were at no loss to guess my connexion with Sir Henry. That, indeed, is of little consequence. I should debase myself did I use the relationship as a means of protection from you, or any one."

As they thus disputed, neither choosing to ap-

proach the real cause of quarrel, Sir Henry looked from the one to the other, with a peace-making countenance, exclaiming—

—" 'Why, what an intricate impeach is this?
I think you both have drunk of Circe's cup.'

Come, my young masters, allow an old man to mediate between you. I am not short-sighted in such matters—The mother of mischief is no bigger than a gnat's wing; and I have known fifty instances in my own day, when, as Will says—

'Gallants have been confronted hardily,
In single opposition, hand to hand,'

in which, after the field was fought, no one could remember the cause of quarrel.—Tush! a small thing will do it—the taking of the wall—or the gentle rub of the shoulder in passing each other, or a hasty word, or a misconceived gesture—Come, forget your cause of quarrel, be what it will—you have had your breathing, and though you put up your rapiers unbloodied, that was no default of yours, but by command of your elder, and one who had right to use authority. In Malta, where the duello is punctiliously well understood, the persons engaged in a single combat

are bound to halt on the command of a knight, or priest, or lady, and the quarrel so interrupted is held as honourably terminated, and may not be revived.—Nephew, it is, I think, impossible that you can nourish spleen against this young gentleman for having fought for his king. Hear my honest proposal, Markham—You know I bear no malice, though I have some reason to be offended with you—Give the young man your hand in friendship, and we will back to the Lodge, all three together, and drink a cup of sack in token of reconciliation."

Markham Everard found himself unable to resist this approach towards kindness on his uncle's part. He suspected, indeed, what was partly the truth, that it was not entirely from reviving good will, but also, that his uncle thought, by such attention, to secure his neutrality at least, if not his assistance, for the safety of the fugitive royalist. He was sensible that he was placed in an awkward predicament; and that he might incur the suspicions of his own party, for holding intercourse even with a near relation, who harboured such guests. But, on the other hand, he thought his services to the Commonwealth had

been of sufficient importance to outweigh whatever envy might urge on that topic. Indeed, although the Civil War had divided families much, and in many various ways, yet when it seemed ended by the triumph of the republicans, the rage of political hatred began to relent, and the ancient ties of kindred and friendship regained at least a part of their former influence. Many reunions were formed; and those who, like Everard, adhered to the conquering party, often exerted themselves for the protection of their deserted relatives.

As these things rushed through his mind, accompanied with the prospect of a renewed intercourse with Alice Lee, by means of which he might be at hand to protect her against every chance, either of injury or insult, he held out his hand to the supposed Scottish page, saying at the same time, "That, for his part, he was very ready to forget the cause of quarrel, or rather, to consider it as arising out of a misapprehension, and to offer Master Kerneguy such friendship as might exist between honourable men, who had embraced different sides in politics."

Unable to overcome the feeling of personal

dignity, which prudence recommended to him to forget, Louis Kerneguy in return bowed low, but without accepting Everard's proffered hand.

"He had no occasion," he said, "to make any exertions to forget the cause of quarrel, for he had never been able to comprehend it; but as he had not shunned the gentleman's resentment, so he was now willing to embrace and return any degree of his favour, with which he might be pleased to honour him."

Everard withdrew his hand with a smile, and bowed in return to the salutation of the page, whose stiff reception of his advances he imputed to the proud pettish disposition of a Scotch boy, trained up in ideas of family consequence and personal importance, which his acquaintance with the world had not yet been sufficient to dispel.

Sir Henry Lee, delighted with the termination of the quarrel, which he supposed to be in deep deference to his own authority, and not displeased with the opportunity of renewing some acquaintance with his nephew, who had, notwithstanding his political demerits, a warmer interest in his affections than he was, perhaps, himself aware of, said, in a tone of consolation, "Never

be mortified, young gentlemen.—I protest it went to my heart to part you, when I saw you stretching yourselves so handsomely, and in fair love of honour, without any malicious or blood-thirsty thoughts. I promise you, had it not been for my duty as Ranger here, and sworn to the office, I would rather have been your umpire than your hindrance.—But a finished quarrel is a forgotten quarrel; and your tilting should have no further consequence excepting the appetite it may have given you."

So saying, he mounted his pony, and moved forward in triumph towards the Lodge by the nearest alley. His feet almost touching the ground, the ball of his toe just resting in the stirrup,—the fore part of the thigh brought round to the saddle,—the heels turned outwards, and sunk as much as possible,—his body precisely erect,—the reins properly and systematically divided in his left hand, his right holding a riding-rod diagonally pointed towards the horse's left ear,—he seemed a champion of the menage, fit to have reined Bucephalus himself. His youthful companions, who attended on either hand like equer-

ries, could scarce suppress a smile at the completely adjusted and systematic posture of the rider, contrasted with the wild and diminutive appearance of the pony, with its shaggy coat, and long tail and mane, and its keen eyes sparkling like red coals from amongst the mass of hair which fell over its small countenance. If the reader has the Duke of Newcastle's book on horsemanship, (*splendida moles!*) he may have some idea of the figure of the good knight, if he can conceive such a figure as one of the cavaliers there represented, seated, in all the graces of his art, on a Welch or Exmoor pony, in its native savage state, without grooming or discipline of any kind; the ridicule being greatly enhanced by the disproportion of size betwixt the animal and its rider.

Perhaps the knight saw their wonder, for the first words he said after they left the ground were, "Pixie, though small, is mettlesome, gentlemen," (here he contrived that Pixie should himself corroborate the assertion, by executing a gambade,)—"he is diminutive, but full of spirit:—indeed, save that I am somewhat too large for

an elfin horseman," (the knight was upwards of six feet high,) "I should remind myself, when I mount him, of the Fairy King, as described by Mike Drayton :—

'Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce upon his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvet,
Ere he himself did settle.
He made him stop, and turn, and bound,
To gallop, and to trot the round,
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle."

"My old friend, Pixie," said Everard, stroking the pony's neck, "I am glad that he has survived all these bustling days—Pixie must be above twenty years old, Sir Henry?"

"Above twenty years, certainly. Yes, nephew Markham, war is a whirlwind in a plantation, which only spares what is least worth leaving. Old Pixie and his old master have survived many a tall fellow, and many a great horse—neither of them good for much themselves. Yet, as Will says, an old man can do somewhat.—So Pixie and I still survive."

So saying, he again contrived that Pixie should show some remnants of activity.

"Still survive?" said the young Scot, completing the sentence which the good knight had left unfinished—"ay, still survive,

'To witch the world with noble horsemanship.'"

Everard coloured, for he felt the irony; but not so his uncle, whose simple vanity never permitted him to doubt the sincerity of the compliment.

"Are you avised of that?" he said. "In King James's time, indeed, I have appeared in the tilt-yard, and there you might have said—

'You saw young Harry with his beaver up.'

As to seeing *old* Harry, why"——Here the knight paused, and looked as a bashful man in labour of a pun—"As to old Harry—why, you might as well see the *devil*. You take me, Master Kerneguy—the devil, you know, is my namesake—ha—ha—ha!—Cousin Everard, I hope your precision is not startled by an innocent jest?"

He was so delighted with the applause of both his companions, that he recited the whole of the celebrated passage referred to, and concluded

with defying the present age, bundle all its wits, Donne, Cowley, Waller, and the rest of them together, to produce a poet of a tenth part of the genius of old Will.

"Why, we are said to have one of his descendants among us—Sir William D'Avenant," said Louis Kerneguy; "and many think him as clever a fellow."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Henry—"Will D'Avenant whom I knew in the North, an officer under Newcastle, when the Marquis lay before Hull?—why, he was an honest cavalier, and wrote good doggrel enough; but how came he a-kin to Will Shakspeare, I trow?"

"Why," replied the young Scot, "by the surer side of the house, and after the old fashion, if D'Avenant speaks truth. It seems that his mother was a good-looking, laughing, buxom mistress of an inn between Stratford and London, at which Will Shakspeare often quartered as he went down to his native town; and that out of friendship and gossipred, as we say in Scotland, Will Shakspeare became godfather to Will D'Avenant; and not contented with this spiritual

affinity, the younger Will is for establishing some claim to a natural one, alleging that his mother was a great admirer of wit, and there were no bounds to her complaisance for men of genius."

"Out upon the hound!" said Colonel Everard; "would he purchase the reputation of descending from poet, or from prince, at the expense of his mother's good fame?—his nose ought to be slit."

"That would be difficult," answered the disguised Prince, recollecting the peculiarity of the bard's countenance.

"Will D'Avenant, the son of Will Shakspeare!" said the knight, who had not yet recovered his surprise at the enormity of the pretension; "why, it reminds me of a verse in the puppet-show of Phaeton, where the hero complains to his mother—

'Besides, by all the village boys I am shamed.
You the Sun's son, you rascal, you be d—d!'*"

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* We observe this couplet in Fielding's farce of *Tumble-down-Dick*, founded on the same classical story. As it was current in the time of the Commonwealth, it must have reached the author of *Tom Jones* by tradition—for no one will suspect the present author of making the anachronism.

I never heard such unblushing assurance in my life!—Will D'Avenant the son of the brightest and best poet that ever was, is, or will be!—But I crave your pardon, nephew—You, I believe, love no stage-plays."

"Nay, I am not altogether so precise as you would make me, uncle. I have loved them perhaps too well in my time, and now I condemn them not altogether, or in gross, though I approve not their excesses and extravagancies.—I cannot, even in Shakspeare, but see many things both scandalous to decency and prejudicial to good manners—many things which tend to ridicule virtue, or to recommend vice,—at least to mitigate the hideousness of its features. I cannot think these fine poems are an useful study, and especially for the youth of either sex, in which bloodshed is pointed out as the chief occupation of the men, and intrigue as the sole employment of the women."

In making these observations, Everard was simple enough to think that he was only giving his uncle an opportunity of defending a favourite opinion, without offending him by a contra-

diction which was so limited and mitigated. But here, as on other occasions, he forgot how obstinate his uncle was in his views, whether of religion, policy, or taste, and that it would be as easy to convert him to the Presbyterian form of government, or engage him to take the abjuration oath, as to shake his belief in Shakspeare. There was another peculiarity in the good knight's mode of arguing, which Everard, being himself of a plain and downright character, and one whose religious tenets were in some degree unfavourable to the suppressions and simulations often used in society, could never perfectly understand. Sir Henry, sensible of his natural heat of temper, was wont scrupulously to guard against it, and would for some time, when in fact much offended, conduct a debate with all the external appearance of composure, till the violence of his feelings would rise so high as to overcome and bear away the artificial barriers opposed to it, and rush down upon the adversary with accumulating wrath. It thus frequently happened, that, like a wily old general, he retreated in the face of his disputant in good order and by degrees, with so moderate

a degree of resistance, as to draw on his antagonist's pursuit to the spot, where, at length, making a sudden and unexpected attack, with horse, foot, and artillery at once, he seldom failed to confound the enemy, though he might not overthrow him.

It was on this principle, therefore, that, hearing Everard's last observation, he disguised his angry feelings, and answered, with a tone where politeness was called in to keep guard upon passion, "That undoubtedly the Presbyterian gentry had given, through the whole of these unhappy times, such proofs of an humble, unaspiring, and unambitious desire of the public good, as entitled them to general credit for the sincerity of those very strong scruples which they entertained against works, in which the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue—sentiments which might convert hardened sinners, and be placed with propriety in the mouths of dying saints and martyrs, —happened, from the rudeness and coarse taste of the times, to be mixed with some broad jests, and similar matter, which lay not much in the way, excepting of those who painfully sought it

out, that they might use it in vilifying what was in itself deserving of the highest applause. But what he wished especially to know from his nephew was, whether any of those gifted men, who had expelled the learned scholars and deep divines of the Church of England from the pulpit, and now flourished in their stead, received any inspiration from the muses, (if he might use so profane a term without offence to Colonel Everard,) or whether they were not as sottishly and brutally averse from elegant letters, as they were from humanity and common sense?"

Colonel Everard might have guessed, by the ironical tone in which this speech was delivered, what storm was mustering within his uncle's bosom—nay, he might have conjectured the state of the old knight's feelings from his emphasis on the word Colonel, by which epithet, as that which most connected his nephew with the party he hated, he never distinguished Everard, unless when his wrath was rising; while, on the contrary, when disposed to be on good terms with him, he usually called him Kinsman, or Nephew Markham. Indeed, it was under a partial sense

that this was the case, and in the hope to see his cousin Alice, that the Colonel forbore making any answer to the harangue of his uncle, which had concluded just as the old knight had alighted at the door of the Lodge, and was entering the hall, followed by his two attendants.

Phœbe at the same time made her appearance in the hall, and received orders to bring some "beverage" for the gentlemen. The Hebe of Woodstock failed not to recognize and welcome Everard by an almost imperceptible courtesy; but she did not serve her interest, as she designed, when she asked the knight, as a question of course, whether he commanded the attendance of Mistress Alice. A stern *No*, was the decided reply; and the ill-timed interference seemed to increase his previous irritation against Everard for his depreciation of Shakspeare. "I would insist," —said Sir Henry, resuming the obnoxious subject, "were it fit for a poor disbanded cavalier to use such a phrase towards a commander of the conquering army,—upon knowing, whether the convulsion which has sent us saints and prophets without end, has not also afforded us a poet with

enough both of gifts and grace to outshine poor old Will, the oracle and idol of us blinded and carnal cavaliers?"

"Surely, sir," replied Colonel Everard, "I know verses written by a friend of the Commonwealth, and those, too, of a dramatic character, which, weighed in an impartial scale, might equal even the poetry of Shakspeare, and which are free from the fustian and indelicacy with which that great bard was sometimes content to feed the coarse appetites of his barbarous audience."

"Indeed!" said the knight, keeping down his wrath with difficulty. "I should like to be acquainted with this master-piece of poetry!—May we ask the name of this distinguished person?"

"It must be Vicars, or Withers, at least," said the feigned Page.

"No, sir," replied Everard, "nor Drummond of Hawthornden, nor Lord Stirling neither—And yet the verses will vindicate what I say, if you will make allowance for indifferent recitation, for I am better accustomed to speak to a battalion than to those who love the muses. The speaker is a lady benighted, who, having lost her

way in a pathless forest, at first expresses herself agitated by the supernatural fears to which her situation gave rise."

"A play, too, and written by a roundhead author!" said Sir Henry in surprise.

"A dramatic production at least," replied his nephew; and began to recite simply, but with feeling, the lines now so well known, but which had then obtained no celebrity, the fame of the author resting upon the basis rather of his polemical and political publications, than on the poetry doomed in after days to support the eternal structure of his immortality.

> "These thoughts may startle, but will not astound
> The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
> By a strong-siding champion, Conscience."

"My own opinion, nephew Markham, my own opinion; better expressed, but just what I said when the scoundrelly roundheads pretended to see ghosts at Woodstock—Go on, I prithee."

Everard proceeded:—

> "O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity!

I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.—
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud,
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

"The rest has escaped me," said the reciter; "and I marvel I have been able to remember so much."

Sir Henry Lee, who had expected some effusion very different from those classical and beautiful lines, soon changed the scornful expression of his countenance, relaxed his contorted upper lip, and, stroking down his beard with his left hand, rested the forefinger of the right upon his eyebrow, in sign of profound attention. After Everard had ceased speaking, the old man sighed as at the end of a strain of sweet music. He then spoke in a gentler manner than formerly.

"Cousin Markham," he said, "these verses flow sweetly, and sound in my ears like the well-touched warbling of a lute. But thou knowest I am something slow of apprehending the full meaning of that which I hear for the first time. Repeat me these verses again, slowly and delibe-

rately; for I always love to hear poetry twice, the first time for sound, and the latter time for sense."

Thus encouraged, Everard recited again the lines with more hardihood and better effect; the knight distinctly understanding, and, from his looks and motions, highly applauding them.

"Yes!" he broke out, when Everard was again silent—"Yes—I do call that poetry—though it were even written by a Presbyterian, or an Anabaptist either. Ay, there were good and righteous people to be found even amongst the offending towns which were destroyed by fire. And certainly I have heard, though but with little credence, (begging your pardon, cousin Everard,) that there are men among you who have seen the error of their ways in rebelling against the best and kindest of masters, and bringing it to that pass that he was murdered by a gang yet fiercer than themselves. Ay, doubtless the gentleness of spirit, and the purity of mind, which dictated those beautiful lines, has long ago taught a man so amiable to say, I have sinned, I have sinned. Yes, I doubt not so sweet a harp has been broken,

even in remorse, for the crimes he was witness to; and now he sits drooping for the shame and sorrow of England,—all his noble rhymes, as Will says,

> 'Like sweet bells, jangled out of tune and harsh.'

Dost thou not think so, Master Kerneguy?"

"Not I, Sir Henry," answered the page.

"What, dost not believe the author of these lines must needs be of the better file, and leaning to our persuasion?"

"I think, Sir Henry, that the poetry qualifies the author to write a play on the subject of Dame Potiphar and her recusant lover; and as for his calling—that last metaphor of the cloud in a black coat or cloak, with silver lining, would have dubbed him a tailor with me, only that I happen to know that he is a schoolmaster by profession, and by political opinions qualified to be Poet Laureate to Cromwell; for what Colonel Everard has repeated with such unction, is the production of no less celebrated a person than John Milton."

"John Milton!" exclaimed Sir Henry in astonishment—"What! John Milton, the blasphemous and bloody-minded author of the *Defensio Populi Anglicani!*—the advocate of the infernal High Court of Fiends!—the creature and parasite of that grand impostor, that loathsome hypocrite, that detestable monster, that prodigy of the universe, that disgrace of mankind, that landscape of iniquity, that sink of sin, and that compendium of baseness, Oliver Cromwell!"

"Even the same John Milton," answered Charles; "schoolmaster to little boys, and tailor to the clouds, which he furnishes with suits of black, lined with silver, at no other expense than that of common sense."

"Markham Everard," said the old knight, "I will never forgive thee—never, never. Thou hast made me speak words of praise respecting one, whose offal should fatten the region-kites.—Speak not to me, sir, but begone! Am I, your kinsman and benefactor, a fit person to be juggled out of my commendation and praise, and brought to bedaub such a whitened sepulchre as the sophist Milton?"

"I profess," said Everard, "this is hard measure, Sir Henry. You pressed me—you defied me to produce poetry as good as Shakspeare's. I only thought of the verses, not of the politics of Milton."

"Oh yes, sir," replied Sir Henry, "we well know your power of making distinctions; you could make war against the King's prerogative, without having the least design against his person. Oh Heaven forbid! But Heaven will hear and judge you.—Set down the beverage, Phœbe—(this was added by way of parenthesis to Phœbe, who entered with refreshment)—Colonel Everard is not thirsty.—You have wiped your mouths, and said you have done no evil. But though you have deceived man, yet God you cannot deceive."

Charged thus at once with the faults imputed to his whole religious sect and political party, Everard felt too late of what imprudence he had been guilty in giving the opening, by disputing his uncle's taste in dramatic poetry. He endeavoured to explain—to apologize.

"I mistook your purpose, honoured sir, and thought you really desired to know something of our literature; and in repeating what you thought not unworthy your hearing, I profess I thought I was doing you pleasure, instead of stirring your indignation."

"O ay!" returned the knight, with unmitigated rigour of resentment—"profess—profess—Ay, that is the new phrase of asseveration, instead of the profane adjuration of courtiers and cavaliers—Oh, sir, *profess* less and *practise* more—and so good day to you.—Master Kerneguy, you will find beverage in my apartment."

While Phœbe stood gaping in admiration at the sudden quarrel which had arisen, Colonel Everard's vexation and resentment was not a little increased by the non-chalance of the young Scotchman, who, with his hands thrust into his pockets, (with a courtly affectation of the time,) had thrown himself into one of the antique chairs, and, though habitually too polite to laugh aloud, and possessing that art of internal laughter by which men of the world learn to indulge their mirth without incurring quarrels, or giving direct

offence, was at no particular trouble to conceal that he was exceedingly amused by the result of the Colonel's visit to Woodstock. Colonel Everard's patience, however, had reached bounds which it was very likely to surpass; for, though differing widely in politics, there was a resemblance betwixt the temper of the uncle and nephew.

"Damnation!" exclaimed the Colonel, in a tone which became a puritan as little as did the exclamation itself.

"Amen!" said Louis Kerneguy, but in a tone so soft and gentle, that the ejaculation seemed rather to escape him than to be designedly uttered.

"Sir!" said Everard, striding towards him in that sort of humour, when a man, full of resentment, would not unwillingly find an object on which to discharge it.

"*Plait il?*" said the page, in the most equable tone, looking up in his face with the most unconscious innocence.

"I wish to know, sir, the meaning of that which you said just now?"

"Only a pouring out of the spirit, worthy sir," returned Kerneguy—"a small skiff dispatched to Heaven on my own account, to keep company with your holy petition just now expressed."

"Sir, I have known a man's bones broke for such a smile as you wear just now," replied Everard.

"There, look you now!" answered the malicious page, who could not weigh even the thoughts of his safety against the enjoyment of his jest—"If you had stuck to your *professions*, worthy sir, you must have choked by this time; but your round execration bolted like a cork from a bottle of cider, and now allows your wrath to come foaming out after it, in the honest unbaptized language of common ruffians."

"For Heaven's sake, Master Girnegy," said Phœbe, "forbear giving the Colonel these bitter words! And do you, good Colonel Markham, scorn to take offence at his hands—he is but a boy."

"If the Colonel or you choose, Mistress Phœbe, you shall find me a man—I think the gentleman can say something to the purpose already.—Probably he may recommend to you the part of

the Lady in Comus; and I only hope his own admiration of John Milton will not induce him to undertake the part of Sampson Agonistes, and blow up this old house with execrations, or pull it down in wrath about our ears."

"Young man," said the Colonel, still in towering passion, "if you respect my principles for nothing else, be grateful to the protection which, but for them, you would not easily attain."

"Nay, then," said the attendant, "I must fetch those who have more influence with you than I have," and away tripped Phœbe; while Kerneguy answered to Everard, in the same provoking tone of calm indifference,—

"Before you menace me with a thing so formidable as your resentment, you ought to be certain whether I may not be compelled by circumstances to deny you the opportunity you seem to point at."

At this moment Alice, summoned no doubt by her attendant, entered the hall hastily.

"Master Kerneguy," she said, "my father requests to see you in Victor Lee's apartment."

Kerneguy arose and bowed, but seemed determined to remain till Everard's departure, so as to prevent any explanation betwixt the cousins.

"Markham," said Alice, hurriedly—"Cousin Everard—I have but a moment to remain here—for God's sake, do you instantly begone!—be cautious and patient—but do not tarry here—my father is fearfully incensed."

"I have had my uncle's word for that, madam," replied Everard, "as well as his injunction to depart, which I will obey without delay. I was not aware that you would have seconded so harsh an order quite so willingly; but I go, madam, sensible I leave those behind whose company is more agreeable."

"Unjust—ungenerous—ungrateful!" said Alice; but, fearful her words might reach ears for which they were not designed, she spoke them in a voice so feeble, that her cousin, for whom they were intended, lost the consolation they were calculated to convey.

He bowed coldly to Alice, as taking leave, and said, with an air of that constrained courtesy

which sometimes covers, among men of condition, the most deadly hatred, "I believe, Master Kerneguy, that I must make it convenient at present to suppress my own peculiar opinions on the matter which we have hinted at in our conversation, in which case I will send a gentleman, who, I hope, may be able to conquer yours."

The supposed Scotsman made him a stately, and at the same time a condescending bow, said he should expect the honour of his commands, offered his hand to Mistress Alice, to conduct her back to her father's apartment, and took a triumphant leave of his rival

Everard, on the other hand, stung beyond his patience, and, from the grace and composed assurance of the youth's carriage, still conceiving him to be either Wilmot, or some of his compeers in rank and profligacy, returned to the town of Woodstock, determined not to be outbearded, even though he should seek redress by means which his principles forbade him to consider as justifiable.

CHAPTER II.

> —— Boundless intemperance
> In nature is a tyranny—it hath been
> The untimely emptying of many a throne,
> And fall of many kings.——
>
> *Macbeth.*

WHILE Colonel Everard retreated in high indignation from the little refection, which Sir Henry Lee had in his good-humour offered, and withdrawn under the circumstances of provocation which we have detailed, the good old knight, scarce recovered from his fit of passion, partook of it with his daughter and guest, and shortly after recollecting some sylvan task, (for though to little efficient purpose, he still regularly attended to his duties as Ranger,) he called Bevis, and went out, leaving the two young people together.

"Now," said the amorous Prince to himself, "that Alice is left without her lion, it remains to

see whether she is herself of a tigress breed.—So, Sir Bevis has left his charge," he said aloud; "I thought the knights of old, those stern guardians of which he is so fit a representative, were more rigorous in maintaining a vigilant guard."

"Bevis," said Alice, "knows that his attendance on me is totally needless; and, moreover, he has other duties to perform, which every true knight prefers to dangling the whole morning by a lady's sleeve."

"You speak treason against all true affection," said the gallant; "a lady's lightest wish should to a true knight be more binding than aught excepting the summons of his sovereign. I wish, Mistress Alice, you would but intimate your slightest desire to me, and you should see how I have practised obedience."

"You never brought me word what o'clock it was this morning," replied the young lady, "and there I sat questioning of the wings of time, when I should have remembered that gentlemen's gallantry can be quite as fugitive as Time himself. How do you know what your disobedience may have cost me and others? Pudding and dumpling

may have been burned to a cinder, for, sir, I practise the old domestic rule of visiting the kitchen; or I may have missed prayers, or I may have been too late for an appointment, simply by the negligence of Master Louis Kerneguy failing to let me know the hour of the day."

"O," replied Kerneguy, "I am one of those lovers who cannot endure absence—I must be eternally at the feet of my fair enemy—such, I think, is the title with which romances teach us to grace the fair and cruel to whom we devote our hearts and lives.—Speak for me, good lute," he added, taking up the instrument, "and show whether I know not my duty."

He sung, but with more taste than execution, the air of a French rondelai, to which some of the wits or sonnetteers, in his gay and roving train, had adapted English verses.

An hour with thee!—When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern grey,
Oh, what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and turmoil, cark and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old?
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee!—When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon;
What shall repay the faithful swain,
His labour on the sultry plain;
And more than cave or sheltering bough,
Cool feverish blood, and throbbing brow?—
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee!—When sun is set,
O, what can teach me to forget
The thankless labours of the day;
The hopes, the wishes, flung away;
The increasing wants, and lessening gains,
The master's pride, who scorns my pains?—
One hour with thee.

"Truly, there is another verse," said the songster; "but I sing it not to you, Mistress Alice, because some of the prudes of the court liked it not."

"I thank you, Master Louis," answered the young lady, "both for your discretion in singing what has given me pleasure, and in forbearing what might offend me. Though a country girl, I pretend to be so far of the court mode, as to receive nothing which does not pass current among the better class there."

"I would," answered Louis, "that you were so well confirmed in their creed, as to let all pass with you, to which court ladies would give currency."

"And what would be the consequence?" said Alice, with perfect composure.

"In that case," said Louis, embarrassed like a general who finds that his preparations for attack do not seem to strike either fear or confusion into the enemy—"In that case you would forgive me, fair Alice, if I spoke to you in a warmer language than that of mere gallantry—if I told you how much my heart was interested in what you consider as idle jesting—if I seriously owned it was in your power to make me the happiest or the most miserable of human beings."

"Master Kerneguy," said Alice, with the same unshaken non-chalance, "let us understand each other. I am little acquainted with high-bred manners, and I am unwilling, I tell you plainly, to be accounted a silly country girl, who, either from ignorance or conceit, is startled at every word of gallantry addressed to her by a young man, who, for the present, has nothing better to do than coin and circulate such false compliments. But I must not let this fear of seeming rustic and awkwardly timorous carry me too far; and being ignorant of the exact limits, I will take care to stop within them."

"I trust, madam," said Kerneguy, "that however severely you may be disposed to judge of me, your justice will not punish me too severely for an offence, of which your charms are alone the occasion?"

"Hear me out, sir, if you please," resumed Alice. "I have listened to you when you spoke *en berger*—nay, my complaisance has been so great, as to answer you *en bergere*—for I do not think anything except ridicule can come of dialogues betwixt Lindor and Jeannaton; and the principal fault of the style is its extreme and tiresome silliness and affectation. But when you begin to kneel, offer to take my hand, and speak with a more serious tone, I must remind you of our real characters. I am the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, sir; and you are, or profess to be, Master Louis Kerneguy, my brother's page, and a fugitive for shelter under my father's roof, who incurs danger by the harbour he affords you, and whose household, therefore, ought not to be disturbed by your unpleasing importunities."

"I would to Heaven, fair Alice," said the King, "that your objections to the suit which I am

urging, not in jest, but most seriously, as that on which my happiness depends, rested only on the low and precarious station of Louis Kerneguy!—Alice, thou hast the soul of thy family, and must needs love honour. I am no more the needy Scottish page, whom I have, for my own purposes, personated, than I am the awkward lout, whose manners I adopted on the first night of our acquaintance. This hand, poor as I seem, can confer a coronet."

"Keep it," said Alice, "for some more ambitious damsel, my lord,—for such I conclude is your title, if this romance be true,—I would not accept your hand, could you confer a duchy."

"In one sense, lovely Alice, you have neither over-rated my power nor my affection. It is your King—it is Charles Stuart who speaks to you!—he can confer duchies, and if beauty can merit them, it is that of Alice Lee. Nay, nay—rise—do not kneel—it is for your sovereign to kneel to thee, Alice, to whom he is a thousand times more devoted, than the wanderer, Louis, dared venture to profess himself. My Alice has, I know, been trained up in those principles of love and obe-

dience to her sovereign, that she cannot, in conscience or in mercy, inflict on him such a wound as would be implied in the rejection of his suit."

In spite of all Charles's attempts to prevent her, Alice had persevered in kneeling on one knee, until she had touched with her lip the hand with which he attempted to raise her. But this salutation ended, she stood upright, with her arms folded on her bosom—her looks humble, but composed, keen and watchful, and so possessed of herself, so little flattered by the communication which the King had supposed would have been overpowering, that he scarce knew in what terms next to urge his solicitation.

"Thou art silent—thou art silent," he said, "my pretty Alice. Has the King no more influence with thee than the poor Scottish page?"

"In one sense every influence," said Alice; "for he commands my best thoughts, my best wishes, my earnest prayers, my devoted loyalty, which, as the men of the House of Lee have been ever ready to testify with the sword, so are the women bound to seal, if necessary, with their blood. But beyond the duties of a true and devo-

ted subject, the King is even less to Alice Lee than poor Louis Kerneguy. The Page could have tendered an honourable union—the Monarch can but offer a contaminated coronet."

"You mistake, Alice,—you mistake," said the King, eagerly. "Sit down and let me speak to you—sit down—What is't you fear?"

"I fear nothing, my lord," answered Alice. "What *can* I fear from the King of Britain—I, the daughter of his loyal subject, and under my father's roof? But I remember the distance betwixt us, and though I might trifle and jest with mine equal, to my King I must only appear in the dutiful posture of a subject, unless where his safety may seem to require that I do not acknowledge his dignity."

Charles though young, being no novice in such scenes, was surprised to encounter resistance of a kind which had not been opposed to him in similar pursuits, even in cases where he had been unsuccessful. There was neither anger, nor injured pride, nor disorder, nor disdain, real or affected, in the manners and conduct of Alice. She stood, as it seemed, calmly prepared to argue on

the subject, which is generally decided by passion—showed no inclination to escape from the apartment, but appeared determined to hear with patience the suit of the lover—while her countenance and manner intimated that she had this complaisance, only in deference to the commands of the King.

"She is ambitious," thought Charles; "it is by dazzling her love of glory, not by mere passionate entreaties, that I must hope to be successful.—I pray you be seated, my fair Alice," he said, "the lover entreats—the King commands you."

"The King," said Alice, "may permit the relaxation of the ceremonies due to royalty, but he cannot abrogate the subject's duty, even by express command. I stand here while it is your Majesty's pleasure to address me—a patient listener, as in duty bound."

"Know then, simple girl," said the King, "that in accepting my proffered affection and protection, you break through no law, either of virtue or morality. Those who are born to royalty are deprived of many of the comforts of private life—chiefly that which is, perhaps, the dearest

and most precious, the power of choosing their own mates for life. Their formal weddings are guided upon principles of political expedience only, and those to whom they are wedded are frequently, in temper, person, and disposition, the most unlikely to make them happy. Society has commiseration, therefore, towards us, and binds our unwilling and often unhappy wedlocks with chains of a lighter and more easy character than those which fetter other men, whose marriage ties, as more voluntarily assumed, ought, in proportion, to be more strictly binding. And therefore, ever since the time that old Henry built these walls, priests and prelates, as well as nobles and statesmen, have been accustomed to see a Fair Rosamond rule the heart of an affectionate monarch, and console him for the few hours of constraint and state which he must bestow upon some angry and jealous Eleanor. To such a connexion the world attaches no blame; they rush to the festival to admire the beauty of the lovely Esther, while the imperious Vashti is left to queen it in solitude; they throng the palace to ask her protection, whose influence is more in the state an

hundred times than that of the proud consort; her offspring rank with the nobles of the land, and vindicate by their courage, like the celebrated Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, their descent from royalty and from love. From such connexions our richest ranks of nobles are recruited; and the mother lives, in the greatness of her posterity honoured and blessed, as she died lamented and wept in the arms of love and friendship."

"Did Rosamond so die, my lord?" said Alice. "Our records say she was poisoned by the injured Queen—poisoned, without time allowed to call to God for the pardon of her many faults. Did her memory so live? I have heard that, when the Bishop purified the church at Godstowe, her monument was broken open by his orders, and her bones thrown out into unconsecrated ground."

"Those were rude old days, sweet Alice," answered Charles; "queens are not now so jealous, nor bishops so rigorous. And know, besides, that, in the lands to which I would lead the loveliest of her sex, other laws obtain, which remove from such ties even the slightest show of scandal. There is a mode of matrimony, which, fulfilling

all the rites of the church, leaves no stain on the conscience; yet investing the bride with none of the privileges peculiar to her husband's condition, infringes not upon the duties which the King owes to his subjects. So that Alice Lee may, in all respects, become the real and lawful wife of Charles Stuart, except that their private union gives her no title to be Queen of England."

"My ambition," said Alice, "will be sufficiently gratified to see Charles king, without aiming to share either his dignity in public, or his wealth and regal luxury in private."

"I understand thee, Alice," said the King, hurt but not displeased. "You ridicule me, being a fugitive, for speaking like a king. It is a habit, I admit, which I have learned, and of which even misfortune cannot cure me. But my case is not so desperate as you may suppose. My friends are still many in these kingdoms, my allies abroad are bound, by regard to their own interest, to espouse my cause. I have hopes given me from Spain, from France, and from other nations; and I have confidence that my father's blood has not been poured forth in vain, nor is doomed to

dry up without due vengeance. My trust is in Him from whom princes derive their title, and, think what thou wilt of my present condition, I have perfect confidence that I shall one day sit on the throne of England."

"May God grant it!" said Alice; "and that he *may* grant it, noble Prince, deign to consider whether you now pursue a conduct likely to conciliate his favour. Think of the course you recommend to a motherless maiden, who has no better defence against your sophistry, than what the natural feeling of female dignity inspires. Whether the death of her father, which would be the consequence of her imprudence;—whether the despair of her brother, whose life has been so often in peril to save that of your Majesty;—whether the dishonour of the roof which has sheltered you, will read well in your annals, or are events likely to propitiate God, whose controversy with your House has been but too visible, or recover the affections of the people of England, in whose eyes such actions are an abomination, I leave to your own royal mind to consider."

Charles paused, struck with a turn to the conversation which placed his own interests more in collision with the gratification of his present passion than he had supposed.

"If your Majesty," said Alice, curtseying deeply, "has no farther commands for my attendance, may I be permitted to withdraw?"

"Stay yet a little, strange and impracticable girl," said the King, "and answer me but one question:—Is it the lowness of my present fortunes that makes my suit contemptible?"

"I have nothing to conceal, my liege," she said, "and my answer shall be as plain and direct as the question you have asked. If I could have been moved to an act of ignominious, insane, and ungrateful folly, it could only arise from my being blinded by that passion, which I believe is pleaded as an excuse for folly and for crime much more often than it has a real existence. I must, in short, have been in love, as it is called—and that might have been with my equal—but surely never with my sovereign, whether such only in title, or in possession of his kingdom."

"Yet loyalty was ever the pride, almost the

ruling passion, of your family, Alice," said the King.

"And could I reconcile that loyalty," said Alice, "with indulging my sovereign, by permitting him to prosecute a suit dishonourable to himself as to me? Ought I, as a faithful subject, to join him in a folly, which might throw yet another stumbling-block in the path to his restoration, and could only serve to diminish his security, even if he were seated upon his throne?"

"At this rate," said Charles, discontentedly, "I had better have retained my character of the page, than assumed that of a sovereign, which it seems is still more irreconcilable with my wishes."

"My candour shall go still farther," said Alice. "I could have felt as little for Louis Kerneguy as for the heir of Britain; for such love as I have to bestow, (and it is not such as I read of in romance, or hear poured forth in song,) has been already conferred on another object. This gives your Majesty pain—I am sorry for it—but the wholesomest medicines are often bitter."

"Yes," answered the King, with some asperity, "and physicians are reasonable enough to ex-

pect their patients to swallow them, as if they were honeycomb.—It is true, then, that whispered tale of the cousin Colonel; and the daughter of the loyal Lee has set her heart upon a rebellious fanatic?"

"My love was given ere I knew what these words fanatic and rebel meant. I recalled it not, for I am satisfied, that amidst the great distractions which divide the kingdom, the person to whom you allude has chosen his part, erroneously perhaps, but conscientiously—he, therefore, has still the highest place in my affection and esteem. More he cannot have, and will not ask, until some happy turn shall reconcile these public differences, and my father be once more reconciled to him. Devoutly do I pray that such an event may occur by your Majesty's speedy and unanimous restoration!"

"You have found out a reason," said the King, pettishly, "to make me detest the thought of such a change—nor have you, Alice, any sincere interest to pray for it. On the contrary, do you not see that your lover, walking side by side with Cromwell, may, or rather must, share his

power? nay, if Lambert does not anticipate him, he may trip up Oliver's heels, and reign in his stead. And think you not he will find means to overcome the pride of the loyal Lees, and achieve an union, for which things are better prepared than that which Cromwell is said to meditate betwixt one of his brats and the no less loyal heir of Fauconberg?"

"Your Majesty," said Alice, "has found a way at length to avenge yourself—if what I have said deserves vengeance."

"I could point out a yet shorter road to your union," said Charles, without minding her distress, or perhaps enjoying the pleasure of retaliation. "Suppose that you sent your Colonel word that there was one Charles Stuart here, who had come to disturb the Saints in their peaceful government, which they had acquired by prayer and preaching, pike and gun—and suppose he had the art to bring down a half-score of troopers, quite enough, as times go, to decide the fate of this heir of royalty—think you not the possession of such a prize as this might obtain from the Rumpers, or from Cromwell, such a reward as

might overcome your father's objections to a roundhead's alliance, and place the fair Alice and her cousin Colonel in full possession of their wishes ?"

"My lord," said Alice, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling—for she too had her share of the hereditary temperament of her family,—"this passes my patience. I have heard, without expressing anger, the most ignominious persuasions addressed to myself, and I have vindicated myself for refusing to be the paramour of a fugitive Prince, as if I had been excusing myself from accepting a share of an actual crown—But can you think I can hear all who are dear to me slandered without emotion or reply ? I will not, sir ; and were you seated with all the terrors of your father's Star-chamber around you, you should hear me defend the absent and the innocent. Of my father I will say nothing, but that if he is now without wealth,—without state, almost without a sheltering home and needful food—it is because he spent all in the service of the King. He needed not to commit any act of treachery or villainy to obtain wealth—he had an ample competence in

his own possessions. For Markham Everard—he knows no such thing as selfishness—he would not, for broad England, had she the treasures of Peru in her bosom, and a paradise on her surface, do a deed that would disgrace his own name, or injure the feelings of another—Kings, my lord, may take a lesson from him. My lord, for the present I take my leave."

"Alice, Alice—stay!" exclaimed the King. "She is gone.—This must be virtue—real, disinterested, over-awing virtue—or there is no such thing on earth. Yet Wilmot and Villiers will not believe a word of it, but add the tale to the other wonders of Woodstock.—'Tis a rare wench! and I profess, to use the Colonel's obtestation, that I know not whether to forgive and be friends with her, or study a dire revenge. If it were not for that accursed cousin—that puritan Colonel—I could forgive everything else to so noble a wench. But a roundheaded rebel preferred to me—the preference avowed to my face, and justified with the assertion, that a king might take a lesson from him—it is gall and wormwood. If the old man had not come up this morning as he did, the

King should have taken or given a lesson, and a severe one. It was a mad rencontre to venture upon with my rank and responsibility—and yet this wench has made me so angry with her, and so envious of him, that if an opportunity offered, I should scarce be able to forbear him.—Ha!—whom have we here?"

The interjection at the conclusion of this royal soliloquy, was occasioned by the unexpected entrance of another personage of the drama.

CHAPTER III.

Benedict. Shall I speak a word in your ear?
Claudio. God bless me from a challenge.
Much Ado about Nothing.

As Charles was about to leave the apartment, he was prevented by the appearance of Wildrake, who entered with an unusual degree of swagger in his gait, and of fantastic importance on his brow. "I crave your pardon, fair sir," he said; "but, as they say in my country, when doors are open dogs enter. I have knocked and called in the hall to no purpose; so, knowing the way to this parlour, sir,—for I am a light partizan, and the road I once travel I never forget,—I ventured to present myself unannounced."

"Sir Henry Lee is abroad, sir, I believe, in the Chase," said Charles, coldly, for the appearance of this somewhat vulgar debauchee was not agreeable to him at the moment, "and Master

Albert Lee has left the Lodge for two or three days."

"I am aware of it, sir," said Wildrake; "but I have no business at present with either."

"And with whom is your business?" said Charles; "that is, if I may be permitted to ask —since I think it cannot in possibility be with me."

"Pardon me in turn, sir," answered the cavalier; "in no possibility can it be imparted to any other but yourself, if you be, as I think you are, though in something better habit, Master Louis Girnigo, the Scottish gentleman who waits upon Master Albert Lee."

"I am all you are like to find for him," answered Charles.

"In truth," said the cavalier, "I do perceive a difference, but rest and better clothing will do much; and I am glad of it, since I would be sorry to have brought a message, such as I am charged with, to a tatterdemalion."

"Let us get to the business, sir, if you please," said the King—"You have a message for me, you say?"

"True, sir," replied Wildrake; "I am the friend of Colonel Markham Everard, sir, a tall man, and a worthy person in the field, although I could wish him a better cause—A message I have to you, it is certain, in a slight note, which I take the liberty of presenting with the usual formalities." So saying he drew his sword, put the billet he mentioned upon the point, and, making a profound bow, presented it to Charles.

The disguised Monarch accepted of it, with a grave return of the salute, and said, as he was about to open the letter, "I am not, I presume, to expect friendly contents in an epistle presented in so hostile a manner?"

"A hem, sir," replied the ambassador, clearing his voice, while he arranged a suitable answer, in which the mild strain of diplomacy might be properly maintained; "not utterly hostile, I suppose, sir, is the invitation, though it be such as must be construed in the commencement rather bellicose and pugnacious. I trust, sir, we shall find that a few thrusts will make a handsome conclusion of the business; and so, as my old master used to say, *Pax nascitur ex bello*. For my own

poor share, I am truly glad to have been graced by my friend Markham Everard in this matter—the rather as I feared the puritan principles with which he is embued, (I will confess the truth to you, worthy sir,) might have rendered him unwilling, from certain scruples, to have taken the gentlemanlike mode of righting himself in such a case as the present. And as I render a friend's duty to my friend, so I humbly hope, Master Louis Girnigo, that I do no injustice to you, in preparing the way for the proposed meeting, where, give me leave to say, I trust, that if no fatal accident occur, we shall be all better friends when the skirmish is over than we were before it began."

"I should suppose so, sir, in any case," said Charles, looking at the letter; "worse than mortal enemies we can scarce be, and it is that footing upon which this billet places us."

"You say true, sir," said Wildrake; "it is, sir, a cartel, introducing to a single combat, for the pacific object of restoring a perfect good understanding betwixt the survivors—in case that fortunately that word can be used in the plural after the event of the meeting."

"In short, we only fight, I suppose," replied the King, "that we may come to a perfectly good and amicable understanding."

"You are right again, sir; and I thank you for the clearness of your apprehension," said Wildrake.—"Ah, sir, it is easy to do with a person of honour and of intellect in such a case as this. And I beseech you, sir, as a personal kindness to myself, that, as the morning is like to be frosty, and myself am in some sort rheumatic—as war will leave its scars behind, sir,—I say, I will entreat of you to bring with you some gentleman of honour, who will not disdain to take a part of what is going forward—a sort of pot-luck, sir—with a poor old soldier like myself—that we may take no harm by standing unoccupied during such cold weather."

"I understand, sir," replied Charles; "if this matter goes forward, be assured I will endeavour to provide you with a suitable opponent."

"I will remain greatly indebted to you, sir," said Wildrake; "and I am by no means curious about the quality of my antagonist.—It is true I write myself esquire and gentleman, and should

account myself especially honoured by crossing my sword with that of Sir Henry or Master Albert Lee; but, should that not be convenient, I will not refuse to present my poor person in opposition to any gentleman who has served the King, which I always hold as a sort of letters of nobility in itself, and, therefore, would on no account decline the duello with such a person."

"The King is much obliged to you, sir," said Charles, "for the honour you do his faithful subjects."

"O, sir, I am scrupulous on that point—very scrupulous.—When there is a roundhead in question, I consult the Herald's books, to see that he is entitled to bear arms, as is Master Markham Everard, without which, I promise you, I had borne none of his cartel. But a cavalier is with me a gentleman, of course—Be his birth ever so low, his loyalty has ennobled his condition."

"It is well, sir," said the King. "This paper requests me to meet Master Everard at six to-morrow morning, at the tree called the King's Oak.—I object neither to place nor time. He proffers the sword, at which, he says, we possess

some equality—I do not decline the weapon; for company, two gentlemen—I shall endeavour to procure myself an associate, and a suitable partner for you, sir, if you incline to join in the dance."

"I kiss your hand, sir, and rest yours, under a sense of obligation," answered the envoy.

"I thank you, sir," continued the King; "I will therefore be ready at place and time, and suitably furnished; and I will either give your friend such satisfaction with my sword as he requires, or will render him such cause for not doing so as he shall be contented with."

"You will excuse me, sir," said Wildrake, "if my mind is too dull, under the circumstances, to conceive any alternative that can remain betwixt two men of honour in such a case, excepting—sa—sa—" He threw himself into a fencing position, and made a pass with his sheathed rapier, but not directed towards the person of the King, whom he addressed.

"Excuse me, sir," said Charles, "if I do not trouble your intellects with consideration of a case which may not occur.—But, for example,

I may plead urgent employment on the part of the public."—This he spoke in a low and mysterious tone of voice, which Wildrake appeared perfectly to comprehend; for he laid his forefinger on his nose with what he meant for a very intelligent and apprehensive nod.

"Sir," said he, "if you be engaged in any affair for the King, my friend shall have every reasonable degree of patience—Nay, I will fight him myself in your stead, merely to stay his stomach, rather than you should be interrupted.—And, sir, if you can find room in your enterprise for a poor gentleman that has followed Lunsford and Goring, you have but to name day, time, and place of rendezvous; for truly, sir, I am tired of the scald hat, cropped hair, and undertaker's cloak, with which my friend has bedizened me, and would willingly ruffle it out once more in the King's cause, when whether I be banged, or hanged, I care not."

"I shall remember what you say, sir, should an opportunity occur," said the King; "and I wish his Majesty had many such subjects.—I presume our business is now settled?"

"When you shall have been pleased, sir, to give me a trifling scrap of writing, to serve for my credentials—for such, you know, is the custom—your written cartel hath its written answer."

"That, sir, will I presently do," said Charles, "and in good time—here are the materials."

"And, sir," continued the envoy—"Ahi!—ahem!—if you have interest in the household for a cup of sack—I am a man of few words, and am somewhat hoarse with much speaking—moreover, a serious business of this kind always makes one thirsty.—Besides, sir, to part with dry lips argues malice, which God forbid should exist in such an honourable conjuncture."

"I do not boast much influence in the house, sir," said the King; "but if you would have the condescension to accept of this broad piece towards quenching your thirst at the George——"

"Sir," said the cavalier, (for the times admitted of this strange species of courtesy, nor was Wildrake a man of such peculiar delicacy as keenly to dispute the matter)—"I am once again beholden to you. But I see not how it consists

with my honour to accept of such accommodation, unless you were to accompany and partake."

"Pardon me, sir," replied Charles, "my safety recommends that I remain rather private at present."

"Enough said," Wildrake observed; "poor cavaliers must not stand on ceremony. I see, sir, you understand cutter's law—when one tall fellow has coin, another must not be thirsty. I wish you, sir, a continuance of health and happiness until to-morrow at the King's Oak, at six o'clock."

"Farewell, sir," said the King, and added, as Wildrake went down the stair whistling, 'Hey for cavaliers,' to which air his long rapier, jarring against the steps and bannisters, bore no unsuitable burthen—"Farewell, thou too just emblem of the state, to which war, and defeat, and despair, have reduced many a gallant gentleman."

During the rest of the day, there occurred nothing peculiarly deserving of notice. Alice sedulously avoided showing towards the disguised Prince any degree of estrangement or shyness, which could be discovered by her father, or by any one else. To all appearance, the two young

persons continued on the same footing in every respect. Yet she made the gallant himself sensible, that this apparent intimacy was assumed merely to save appearances, and in no way designed as retracting from the severity with which she had rejected his suit. The sense that this was the case, joined to his injured self-love, and his enmity against a successful rival, induced Charles early to withdraw himself to a solitary walk in the wilderness, where, like Hercules in the Emblem of Cebes divided betwixt the personifications of Virtue and of Pleasure, he listened alternately to the voice of Wisdom and of passionate Folly.

Prudence urged to him the importance of his own life to the future prosecution of the great object in which he had for the present miscarried—the restoration of monarchy in England, the rebuilding of the throne, the regaining the crown of his father, the avenging his death, and restoring to their fortunes and their country the numerous exiles, who were suffering poverty and banishment on account of their attachment to his cause. Pride too, or rather a just and natural sense of dignity,

displayed the unworthiness of a Prince descending to actual personal conflict with a subject of any degree, and the ridicule which would be thrown on his memory, should he lose his life for an obscure intrigue by the hand of a private gentleman. What would his sage counsellors, Nicholas and Hyde—what would his kind and wise governor, the Marquis of Hertford, say to such an act of rashness and folly? Would it not be likely to shake the allegiance of the staid and prudent persons of the royalist party, since wherefore should they expose their lives and estates to raise to the government of a kingdom a young man who could not command his own temper? To this was to be added, the consideration that even his success would add double difficulties to his escape, which already seemed sufficiently precarious. If, stopping short of death, he merely had the better of his antagonist, how did he know that he might not seek revenge by delivering up to government the Malignant Louis Kerneguy, whose real character could not in that case fail to be discovered?

These considerations strongly recommended to Charles that he should clear himself of the chal-

lenge without fighting; and the reservation under which he had accepted it, afforded him some opportunity of doing so.

But Passion also had her arguments, which she addressed to a temper rendered irritable by recent distress and mortification. In the first place, if he was a prince, he was also a gentleman, entitled to resent as such, and obliged to give or claim the satisfaction expected on occasion of differences among gentlemen. With Englishmen, she urged, he could never lose interest by showing himself ready, instead of sheltering himself under his royal birth and pretensions, to come frankly forward and maintain what he had done or said on his own responsibility. In a free nation, it seemed as if he would rather gain than lose in the public estimation by a conduct which could not but seem gallant and generous. Then a character for courage was far more necessary to support his pretensions than any other kind of reputation; and the lying under a challenge, without replying to it, might bring his spirit into question. What would Villers and Wilmot say of an intrigue, in which he

had allowed himself to be shamefully baffled by a country girl, and had failed to revenge himself on the rival? The pasquinades which they would compose, the witty sarcasms which they would circulate on the occasion, would be harder to endure than the grave rebukes of Hertford, Hyde, and Nicholas. This reflection, added to the stings of youthful and awakened courage, at length fixed his resolution, and he returned to Woodstock determined to keep his appointment, come of it what might.

Perhaps there mingled with his resolution a secret belief that such a rencontre would not prove fatal. He was in the flower of his youth, active in all his exercises, and no way inferior to Colonel Everard, as far as the morning's experiment had gone, in that of self-defence. At least such recollection might pass through his royal mind, as he hummed to himself a well-known ditty which he had picked up during his residence in Scotland—

"A man may drink and not be drunk,
A man may fight and not be slain;
A man may kiss a bonnie lass,
And yet be welcome back again."

Meanwhile the busy and all-directing Doctor Rochecliffe had contrived to intimate to Alice that she must give him a private audience, and she found him by appointment in what was called the study, once filled with ancient books, which, long since converted into cartridges, had made more noise in the world at their final exit, than during the space which had intervened betwixt that and their first publication. The Doctor seated himself in a high-backed leathern easy-chair, and signed to Alice to fetch a stool and sit down beside him.

"Alice," said the old man, taking her hand affectionately, "thou art a good girl, a wise girl, a virtuous girl, one of those whose price is above rubies —not that *rubies* is the proper translation—but remind me to tell you of that another time—Alice, thou knowest who this Louis Kerneguy is—nay, hesitate not to me—I know everything—I am well aware of the whole matter.—Thou knowest this honoured house holds the Fortunes of England." Alice was about to answer.—"Nay, speak not, but listen to me, Alice,—How does he bear himself towards you?"

Alice coloured with the deepest crimson.—" I am a country-bred girl," she said, " and his manners are too court-like for me."

" Enough said—I know it all.—Alice, he is exposed to a great danger to-morrow, and you must be the happy means to prevent him."

" I prevent him !—how, and in what manner ?" said Alice, in surprise.—" It is my duty, as a subject, to do anything—anything that may become my father's daughter——"

Here she stopped, considerably embarrassed.

" Yes," continued the doctor, " to-morrow he hath made an appointment—an appointment with Markham Everard ; the hour and place are set—six in the morning, by the King's Oak. If they meet, one will probably fall."

" Now, may God forefend they should meet," said Alice, turning as suddenly pale as she had previously reddened. " But harm cannot come of it—Everard will never lift his sword against the King."

" For that," said Doctor Rochecliffe, " I would not warrant. But if that unhappy young gentleman shall have still some reserve of the

loyalty which his general conduct entirely disavows, it would not serve us here; for he knows not the King, but considers him merely as a cavalier, from whom he has received injury."

"Let him know the truth, Doctor Rochecliffe, let him know it instantly," said Alice; "*he* lift hand against the King, a fugitive and defenceless! He is incapable of it. My life on the issue, he becomes most active in his preservation."

"That is the thought of a maiden, Alice," answered the doctor; "and, as I fear, of a maiden whose wisdom is misled by her affections. It were worse than treason to admit a rebel officer, the friend of the arch-traitor Cromwell, into so great a secret. I dare not answer for such rashness. Hammond was trusted by his father, and you know what came of it."

"Then let my father know. He will meet Markham, or send to him, representing the indignity done to him by attacking his guest."

"We dare not let your father into the secret who Louis Kerneguy really is. I did but hint

the possibility of Charles taking refuge at Woodstock, and the rapture into which Sir Henry broke out, the preparations for accommodation and defence which he began to talk of, plainly showed that the mere enthusiasm of his loyalty would have led to a risk of discovery. It is you, Alice, who must save the hopes of every true royalist."

"I?" answered Alice; "it is impossible.—Why cannot my father be induced to interfere, as in behalf of his friend and guest, though he know him as no other than Louis Kerneguy?"

"You have forgot your father's character, my young friend," said the doctor—"an excellent man, and the best of Christians, till there is a clashing of swords, and then he starts up the complete martialist, as deaf to every pacific reasoning as if he were a game-cock."

"You forget, Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "that this very morning, if I understand the thing aright, my father prevented them from fighting."

"Ay," answered the doctor, "because he deemed himself bound to keep the peace in the Royal Park; but it was done with such regret, Alice,

that, should he find them at it again, I am clear to foretell he will only so far postpone the combat as to conduct them to some unprivileged ground, and there bid them tilt and welcome, while he regaled his eyes with a scene so pleasing —No, Alice, it is you, and you only, who can help us in this extremity."

"I see no possibility," said she, again colouring, "how I can be of the least use."

"You must send a note," answered Doctor Rochecliffe, "to the King—a note such as all women know how to write better than any man can teach them—to meet you at the precise hour of the rendezvous. He will not fail you, for I know his unhappy foible."

"Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, gravely,—"you have known me from infancy—What have you seen in me to induce you to believe that I should ever follow such unbecoming counsel?"

"And if you have known *me* from infancy," retorted the doctor, "what have you seen of *me* that you should suspect me of giving counsel to my friend's daughter which it would be misbecoming in her to follow? You cannot be fool

enough, I think, to suppose, that I mean you should carry your complaisance farther than to keep him in discourse for an hour or two, till I have all in readiness for his leaving this place, from which I can fright him by the terrors of an alleged search?—So, C. S. mounts his horse and rides off, and Mistress Alice Lee has the honour of saving him."

"Yes, at the expense of her own reputation," said Alice, "and the risk of an eternal stain on my family.—You say you know all—What can the King think of my appointing an assignation with him after what has passed, and how will it be possible to disabuse him respecting the purpose of my doing so?"

"I will disabuse him, Alice; I will explain the whole."

"Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "you propose what is impossible. You can do much by your ready wit and great wisdom; but if new-fallen snow were once sullied, not all your art could wash it white again; and it is altogether the same with a maiden's reputation."

"Alice, my dearest child," said the doctor,

"bethink you that if I recommend this means of saving the life of the King, at least rescuing him from instant peril, it is because I see no other of which to avail myself. If I bid you assume, even for a moment, the semblance of what is wrong, it is but in the last extremity, and under circumstances which cannot return—I will take the surest means to prevent all evil report which can arise from what I recommend."

"Say not so, doctor," said Alice; "better undertake to turn back the Isis than to stop the course of calumny. The King will make boast to his whole licentious court, of the ease with which, but for a sudden alarm, he could have brought off Alice Lee as a paramour—the mouth which confers honour on others, will then be the means to deprive me of mine. Take a fitter course, one more becoming your own character and profession. Do not lead him to fail in an engagement of honour, by holding out the prospect of another engagement equally dishonourable, whether false or true. Go to the King himself, speak to him, as the servants of God have a right to speak, even to earthly sovereigns. Point

out to him the folly and the wickedness of the course he is about to pursue—urge upon him, that he fear the sword, since wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword. Tell him, that the friends who died for him in the field at Worcester, on the scaffolds, and on the gibbets, since that bloody day—that the remnant who are in prison, scattered, fled, and ruined on his account, deserve better of him and his father's race, than that he should throw away his life in an idle brawl—Tell him, that it is dishonest to venture that which is not his own, dishonourable to betray the trust which brave men have reposed in his virtue and in his courage."

Doctor Rochecliffe looked on her with a melancholy smile, his eyes glistening as he said, "Alas, Alice, even I could not plead that just cause to him so eloquently or so impressively as thou dost. But, alack! Charles would listen to neither. It is not from priests, or women, he would say, that men should receive counsel in affairs of honour."

"Then hear me, Doctor Rochecliffe—I will appear at the place of rendezvous, and I will

prevent the combat—do not fear that I can do what I say—at a sacrifice indeed, but not that of my reputation. My heart may be broken"—she endeavoured to stifle her sobs with difficulty—"for the consequence—but not in the imagination of a man, and far less that man her sovereign, shall a thought of Alice Lee be associated with dishonour." She hid her face in her handkerchief, and burst out into unrestrained tears.

"What means this hysterical passion?" said Doctor Rochecliffe, surprised and somewhat alarmed by the vehemence of her grief—"Maiden, I must have no concealments—I must know."

"Exert your ingenuity, then, and discover it," said Alice—for a moment displeased at the doctor's pertinacious self-importance—"Guess my purpose, as you can guess at everything else. It is enough to have to go through my task, I will not endure the distress of telling it over, and that to one who—forgive me, dear doctor—might not think my agitation on this occasion fully warranted."

"Nay then, my young mistress, you must be ruled," said Rochecliffe; "and if I cannot make

you explain yourself, I must see whether your father can gain so far on you." So saying, he arose somewhat displeased, and walked towards the door.

"You forget what you yourself told me, Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "of the risk of communicating this great secret to my father."

"It is too true—" he said, stopping short and turning round; "and I think, wench, thou art too smart for me, and I have not met many such. But thou art a good girl, and wilt tell me thy device of free-will—it concerns my character and influence with the King, that I should be fully acquainted with whatever is *actum atque tractatum*, done and treated of in this matter."

"Trust your character to me, good doctor," said Alice, attempting to smile; "it is of firmer stuff than those of women, and will be safer in my custody than mine could have been in yours. And thus much I condescend—you shall see the whole scene—you shall go with me yourself, and much will I feel emboldened and heartened by your company."

“ That is something,” said the doctor, though not altogether satisfied with this limited confidence—“ Thou wert ever a clever wench, and I will trust thee—indeed, trust thee I find I must, whether voluntarily or no.”

“ Meet me then,” said Alice, “ in the wilderness to-morrow. But first tell me, are you well assured of time and place?—a mistake were fatal.”

“ Assure yourself my information is entirely accurate,” said the doctor, resuming his air of consequence, which had been a little diminished during the latter part of their conference.

“ May I ask,” said Alice, “ through what channel you acquired such important information?”

“ You may ask unquestionably,” he answered, now completely restored to his supremacy ; “ but whether I will answer or not, is a very different question. I conceive neither your reputation nor my own are interested in your remaining in ignorance on that subject. So I have my secrets as well as you, mistress ; and some of them, I fancy, are a good deal more worth knowing.”

“ Be it so,” said Alice, quietly : “ if you will

meet me in the wilderness by the broken dial at half past five exactly, we will go together to-morrow, and watch them as they come to the rendezvous. I will on the way get the better of my present timidity, and explain to you the means I design to employ to prevent mischief. You can perhaps think of making some effort which may render my interference, unbecoming and painful as it must be, altogether unnecessary."

"Nay, my child," said the doctor, "if you place yourself in my hands, you will be the first that ever had reason to complain of my want of conduct, and you may well judge you are the very last (one excepted) whom I would see suffer for want of counsel.—At half past five then, at the dial in the wilderness—and God bless our undertaking."

Here their interview was interrupted by the sonorous voice of Sir Henry Lee, which shouted their names, "Daughter Alice—Doctor Rochecliffe," through passage and gallery.

"What do you here," said he, entering, "sitting like two crows in a mist, when we have such rare sport below? Here is this wild crack-brained

boy Louis Kerneguy, now making me laugh till my sides are fit to split, and now playing on his guitar sweetly enough to win a lark from the heavens.—Come away with you, come away. It is hard work to laugh alone."

CHAPTER IV.

> This is the place, the centre of the grove;
> Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
>
> JOHN HOME.

THE sun had risen on the broad boughs of the forest, but without the power of penetrating into its recesses, which hung rich with heavy dew-drops, and were beginning on some of the trees to exhibit the varied tints of autumn; it being the season when Nature, like a prodigal whose race is well nigh run, seems desirous to make up in profuse gaiety and variety of colours, for the short space which her splendour has then to endure. The birds were silent—and even Robin-redbreast, whose chirruping song was

heard among the bushes near the Lodge, emboldened by the largesses with which the good old knight always encouraged his familiarity, did not venture into the recesses of the wood, alarmed by the neighbourhood of the sparrow-hawk, and other enemies of a similar description, preferring the vicinity of the dwellings of man, from whom he, almost solely among the feathered tribes, seems to experience disinterested protection.

The scene was therefore at once lovely and silent, when the good Doctor Rochecliffe, wrapped in a scarlet roquelair, which had seen service in its day, muffling his face more from habit than necessity, and supporting Alice on his arm, (she also defended by a cloak against the cold and damp of the autumn morning,) glided through the tangled and long grass of the darkest alleys, almost ancle-deep in dew, towards the place appointed for the intended duel. Both so eagerly maintained the consultation in which they were engaged, that they were alike insensible of the roughness and discomforts of the road, though often obliged to force their way through brushwood and coppice, which poured down on them

all the liquid pearls with which they were loaded, till the mantles they were wrapped in hung lank by their sides, and clung to their shoulders heavily charged with moisture. They stopped when they had attained a station under the coppice, and shrouded by it, from which they could see all that passed on the little esplanade before the King's Oak, whose broad and scathed form, contorted and shattered limbs, and frowning brows, made him appear like some ancient war-worn champion, well selected to be the umpire of a field of single combat.

The first person who appeared at the rendezvous was the gay cavalier Roger Wildrake. He also was wrapped in his cloak, but had discarded his puritanic beaver, and wore in its stead a Spanish hat, with a feather and gilt hat-band, all of which had encountered bad weather and hard service; but to make amends for the appearance of poverty by the show of pretension, the castor was accurately adjusted after what was rather profanely called the d—mme cut, used among the more desperate cavaliers. He came very hastily, and exclaimed aloud—"First in the field

after all, by Jove, though I bilked Everard in order to have my morning draught.—It has done me much good," he added, smacking his lips.—"Well, I suppose I should search the ground ere my principal comes up, whose presbyterian watch trudges as slow as his presbyterian step."

He took his rapier from under his cloak, and seemed about to search the thickets around.

"I will prevent him," whispered the Doctor to Alice. "I will keep faith with you—you shall not come on the scene—*nisi dignus vindice nodus*—I'll explain that another time. *Vindex* is feminine as well as masculine, so the quotation is defensible.—Keep you close."

So saying, he stepped forward on the esplanade, and bowed to Wildrake.

"Master Louis Kerneguy," said Wildrake, pulling off his hat; but instantly discovering his error, he added, "But no—I beg your pardon, sir—Fatter, shorter, older.—Mr Kerneguy's friend, I suppose, with whom I hope to have a turn by and by.—And why not now, sir, before our principals come up? just a snack to stay the orifice of the stomach, till the dinner is served, sir? What say you?"

"To open the orifice of the stomach more likely, or to give it a new one," said the doctor.

"True, sir," said Roger, who seemed now in his element; "you say well—that is as thereafter may be.—But come, sir, you wear your face muffled. I grant you, it is honest men's fashion at this unhappy time; the more is the pity. But we do all above board—we have no traitors here. I'll get into my gears first, to encourage you, and show you that you have to deal with a gentleman who honours the King, and is a match fit to fight with any who follows him, as doubtless you do, sir, since you are the friend of Master Louis Kerneguy."

All this while, Wildrake was busied undoing the clasps of his square-caped cloak.

"Off—off, ye lendings," he said, "borrowings I should more properly call you—

> Via the curtain which shadow'd Borgia.'"

So saying, he threw the cloak from him, and appeared in cuerpo, in a most cavalier-like doublet, of greasy crimson satin, pinked and slashed with what had been once white tiffany; breeches of the same; and nether-stocks, or, as we now call

them, stockings, darned in many places, and which, like those of Poins, had been once peach-coloured. A pair of pumps, ill calculated for a walk through the dew, and a broad shoulder-belt of tarnished embroidery, completed his equipment.

"Come, sir!" he exclaimed; "make haste, off with your slough—Here I stand tight and true —as loyal a lad as ever stuck rapier through a roundhead.—Come, sir, to your tools!" he continued; "we may have half-a-dozen thrusts before they come yet, and shame them for their tardiness. —Pshaw!" he exclaimed in a most disappointed tone, when the doctor, unfolding his cloak, showed his clerical dress; "Tush! it's but the parson after all!"

Wildrake's respect for the Church, however, and his desire to remove one who might possibly interrupt a scene to which he looked forward with peculiar satisfaction, induced him presently to assume another tone.

"I beg pardon," he said, "my dear doctor —I kiss the hem of your cassock—I do, by the thundering Jove—I beg your pardon again.— But I am happy I have met with you—They are raving for your presence at the Lodge—to

marry, or christen, or bury, or confess, or something very urgent.—For Heaven's sake, make haste!"

"At the Lodge?" said the doctor; "why, I left the Lodge this instant—I was there later, I am sure, than you could be, who came the Woodstock road."

"Well," replied Wildrake, "it is at Woodstock they want you.—Rat it, did I say the Lodge?—No, no—Woodstock—Mine host cannot be hanged—his daughter married—his bastard christened, or his wife buried—without the assistance of a *real* clergyman—Your Holdenoughs won't do for them.—He's a true man mine host; so, as you value your function, make haste."

"You will pardon me, Master Wildrake," said the doctor—"I wait for Master Louis Kerneguy."

"The devil you do!" exclaimed Wildrake. "Why, I always knew the Scots could do nothing without their minister; but d—n it, I never thought they put them to this use neither. But I have known jolly customers in orders, who

understood to handle the sword as well as their prayer-book. You know the purpose of our meeting, doctor. Do you come only as a ghostly comforter—or as a surgeon, perhaps—or do you ever take bilboa in hand?—Sa, sa!"

Here he made a fencing demonstration with his sheathed rapier.

"I have done so, sir, on necessary occasion," said Doctor Rochecliffe.

"Good sir, let this stand for a necessary one," said Wildrake. "You know my devotion for the Church. If a divine of your skill would do me the honour to exchange but three passes with me, I should think myself happy for ever."

"Sir," said Rochecliffe, smiling, "were there no other objection to what you propose, I have not the means—I have no weapon."

"What? you want the *de quoi?* that is unlucky indeed. But you have a stout cane in your hand—what hinders our trying a pass (my rapier being sheathed of course) until our principals come up? My pumps are full of this frost-dew; and I shall be a toe or two out of pocket, if I am to stand still all the time they are stretch-

ing themselves; for, I fancy, doctor, you will be of my opinion, that the matter will not be a fight of cock-sparrows."

"My business here is to make it, if possible, be no fight at all," said the divine.

"Now, rat me, doctor, but that is too spiteful," said Wildrake; "and were it not for my respect for the Church, I could turn presbyterian, to be revenged."

"Stand back a little, if you please, sir," said the doctor; "do not press forward in that direction."—For Wildrake, in the agitation of his movements, induced by his disappointment, approached the spot where Alice remained still concealed.

"And wherefore not, I pray you, doctor?" said the cavalier.

But on advancing a step, he suddenly stopped short, and muttered to himself, with a round oath of astonishment, "A petticoat in the coppice, by all that is reverend, and at this hour in the morning—*Whew—ew—ew!*"—He gave vent to his surprise in a long low interjectional whistle; then turning to the doctor, with his finger on the side

of his nose, "You're sly, doctor, d—d sly! But why not give me a hint of your—your commodity there—your contraband goods? Gad, sir, I am not a man to expose the eccentricities of the Church."

"Sir," said Doctor Rochecliffe, "you are impertinent; and if time served, and it were worth my while, I would chastise you."

And the doctor, who had served long enough in the wars to have added some of the qualities of a captain of horse to those of the divine, actually raised his cane, to the infinite delight of the rake, whose respect for the Church was by no means able to subdue his love of mischief.

"Nay, doctor," said he, "if you wield your weapon backsword-fashion, in that way, and raise it as high as your head, I shall be through you in a twinkling." So saying he made a pass with his sheathed rapier, not precisely at the doctor's person, but in that direction; when Rochecliffe, changing the direction of his cane from the broadsword guard to that of the rapier, made the cavalier's sword spring ten yards out of his hand, with all the dexterity of my friend Francalanza.

At this moment both the principal parties appeared on the field.

Everard exclaimed angrily to Wildrake, " Is this your friendship? In Heaven's name, what make you in that fool's jacket, and playing the pranks of a jack-pudding?" while his worthy second, somewhat crest-fallen, held down his head, like a boy caught in roguery, and went to pick up his weapon, stretching his head, as he passed, into the coppice, to obtain another glimpse, if possible, of the concealed object of his curiosity.

Charles, in the meantime, still more surprised at what he beheld, called out on his part— " What! Doctor Rochecliffe become literally one of the church militant, and tilting with my friend cavalier Wildrake? May I use the freedom to ask him to withdraw, as Colonel Everard and I have some private business to settle?"

It was Doctor Rochecliffe's cue, on this important occasion, to have armed himself with the authority of his sacred office, and used a tone of interference which might have overawed even a monarch, and made him feel that his monitor spoke by a warrant higher than his own. But the

indiscreet latitude he had just given to his own passion, and the levity in which he had been detected, were very unfavourable to his assuming that superiority, to which so uncontrollable a spirit as that of Charles, wilful as a prince, and capricious as a wit, was at all likely to submit. The doctor did, however, endeavour to rally his dignity, and replied, with the gravest, and at the same time the most respectful, tone he could assume, that he also had business of the most urgent nature, which prevented him from complying with Master Kerneguy's wishes, and leaving that spot.

"Excuse this untimely interruption," said Charles, taking off his hat, and bowing to Colonel Everard, "which I will immediately put an end to."

Everard gravely returned his salute, and was silent.

"Are you mad, Doctor Rochecliffe?" said Charles—"or are you deaf?—or have you forgotten your mother-tongue? I desired you to leave this place."

"I am not mad," said the divine, rousing up

his resolution, and regaining the natural firmness of his voice—"I would prevent others from being so; I am not deaf—I would pray others to hear the voice of reason and religion; I have not forgotten my mother-tongue—but I have come hither to speak the language of the Master of kings and princes."

"To fence with broomsticks, I should rather suppose," said the King—"come, Doctor Rochecliffe, this sudden fit of assumed importance befits you as little as your late frolic. You are not, I apprehend, either a Catholic priest or a Scotch Mass-John, to claim devoted obedience from your hearers, but a Church of Englandman, subject to the rules of that Communion—and to its HEAD." In speaking the last words, the King lowered his voice to a low and impressive whisper. Everard observing this drew back, the natural generosity of his temper directing him to avoid overhearing private discourse, in which the safety of the speakers might be deeply concerned. They continued, however, to observe great caution in their forms of expression.

"Master Kerneguy," said the clergyman, "it

is not I who assume authority or control over your wishes—God forbid; I do but tell you what reason, scripture, religion, and morality, alike prescribe for your rule of conduct."

"And I, doctor," said the King, smiling, and pointing to the unlucky cane, "will take your example rather than your precept. If a reverend clergyman will himself fight a bout at single-stick, what right can he have to interfere in gentlemen's quarrels?—Come, sir, remove yourself, and do not let your present obstinacy cancel former obligations."

"Bethink yourself," said the divine,—"I can say one word which will prevent all this."

"Do it," replied the King, "and in doing so belie the whole tenor and actions of an honourable life—abandon the principles of your church, and become a perjured traitor and an apostate, to prevent another person from discharging his duty as a gentleman! This were indeed killing your friend, to prevent the risk of his running himself into danger. Let the Passive Obedience, which is so often in your mouth, and no doubt in your head, put your feet for

once into motion, and step aside for ten minutes. Within that space your assistance may be needed, either as body-curer or soul-curer."

"Nay then," said Doctor Rochecliffe, "I have but one argument left."

While this conversation was carried on apart, Everard had almost forcibly detained by his own side his follower, Wildrake, whose greater curiosity, and lesser delicacy, would otherwise have thrust him forward, to get, if possible, into the secret. But when he saw the doctor turn into the coppice, he whispered eagerly to Everard —"A gold Carolus to a commonwealth farthing, the doctor has not only come to preach a peace, but has brought the principal conditions along with him!"

Everard made no answer; he had already unsheathed his sword; and Charles hardly saw Rochecliffe's back fairly turned, than he lost no time in following his example. But, ere they had done more than salute each other, with the usual courteous flourish of their weapons, Doctor Rochecliffe again stood between them, leading in his hand Alice Lee, her garments dank

with dew, and her long hair heavy with moisture, and totally uncurled. Her face was extremely pale, but it was the paleness of desperate resolution, not of fear. There was a dead pause of astonishment—the combatants rested on their swords—and even the forwardness of Wildrake only vented itself in half-suppressed ejaculations, as, "Well done, doctor—this beats the 'parson among the pease'—No less than your patron's daughter—And Mistress Alice, whom I thought a very snow-drop, turned out a dog-violet after all—a Lindabrides, by heavens, and altogether one of ourselves!"

Excepting these unheeded mutterings, Alice was the first to speak.

"Master Everard," she said—"Master Kerneguy, you are surprised to see me here—Yet, why should I not tell the reason at once? Convinced that I am, however guiltlessly, the unhappy cause of your misunderstanding, I am too much interested to prevent fatal consequences to pause upon any step which may end it.—Master Kerneguy, have my wishes, my entreaties, my prayers—have your noble thoughts—the recollections of your own high duties, no weight with you in this

matter? Let me entreat you to consult reason, religion, and common sense, and return your weapon."

"I am obedient as an Eastern slave, madam," answered Charles, sheathing his sword; "but I assure you, the matter about which you distress yourself is a mere trifle, which will be much better settled betwixt Colonel Everard and myself in five minutes, than with the assistance of the whole Convocation of the Church, with a female parliament to assist their reverend deliberations. —Mr Everard, will you oblige me by walking a little further?—We must change ground, it seems."

"I am ready to attend you, sir," said Everard, who had sheathed his sword so soon as his antagonist did so.

"I have then no interest with you, sir," said Alice, continuing to address the King—"Do you not fear I should use the secret in my power to prevent this affair going to extremity? Think you this gentleman, who raises his hand against you, if he knew——"

"If he knew that I were Lord Wilmot, madam, you would say?—Accident has given him

proof to that effect, with which he is already satisfied, and I think you would find it difficult to induce him to embrace a different opinion."

Alice paused, and looked on the King with great indignation, the following words dropping from her mouth by intervals, as if they burst forth one by one in spite of feelings that would have restrained them—"Cold—selfish—ungrateful—unkind!—Woe to the land which——" Here she paused with marked emphasis, then added —"which shall number thee, or such as thee, among her nobles and rulers!"

"Nay, fair Alice," said Charles, whose good nature could not but feel the severity of this reproach, though too slightly to make all the desired impression, "You are too unjust to me—too partial to a happier man. Do not call me unkind; I am but here to answer Mr Everard's summons. I could neither decline attending, nor withdraw now I am here, without loss of honour; and my loss of honour would be a disgrace which must extend to many—I cannot fly from Mr Everard —it would be too shameful. If he abides by his

message, it must be decided as such affairs usually are. If he retreats or yields it up, I will, for your sake, wave punctilio. I will not even ask an apology for the trouble it has afforded me, but let all pass as if it were the consequence of some unhappy mistake, the grounds of which shall remain on my part uninquired into.—This I will do for your sake, and it is much for a man of honour to condescend so far—You *know* that the condescension from me in particular is great indeed. Then do not call me ungenerous, or ungrateful, or unkind, since I am ready to do all, which, as a man, I can do, and more perhaps than as a man of honour I ought to do."

"Do you hear this, Markham Everard," exclaimed Alice—"do you hear this?—The dreadful option is left entirely at your disposal. You were wont to be temperate in passion, religious, forgiving—will you, for a mere punctilio, drive on this private and unchristian broil to a murderous extremity? Believe me, if you *now*, contrary to all the better principles of your life, give the reins to your passions, the consequences may be

such as you will rue for your lifetime, and even, if Heaven have not mercy, rue after your life is finished."

Markham Everard remained for a moment gloomily silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground. At length he looked up, and answered her—"Alice, you are a soldier's daughter—a soldier's sister. All your relations, even including one whom you then entertained some regard for, have been made soldiers by these unhappy discords. Yet you have seen them take the field—in some instances on contrary sides, to do their duty where their principles called them, without manifesting this extreme degree of interest. Answer me—and your answer shall decide my conduct—Is this youth, so short while known, already of more value to you than those dear connexions, father, brother, and kinsman, whose departure to battle you saw with comparative indifference?—Say *this*, and it shall be enough—I leave the ground, never to see you or this country again."

"Stay, Markham, stay; and believe me when I say, that if I answer your question in the affirmative, it is because Master Kerneguy's safety

comprehends more, much more, than that of any of those you have mentioned."

"Indeed! I did not know a coronet had been so superior in value to the crest of a private gentleman," said Everard; "yet I have heard that many women think so."

"You apprehend me amiss," said Alice, perplexed between the difficulty of so expressing herself as to prevent immediate mischief, and at the same time anxious to combat the jealousy and disarm the resentment which she saw arising in the bosom of her lover. But she found no words fine enough to draw the distinction, without leading to a discovery of the King's actual character, and perhaps, in consequence, to his destruction.—"Markham," she said, "have compassion on me. Press me not at this moment—believe me, the honour and happiness of my father, of my brother, and of my whole family, are interested in Master Kerneguy's safety—are inextricably concerned in this matter resting where it now does."

"Oh, ay—I doubt not," said Everard; "the House of Lee ever looked up to nobility, and

valued in their connexions the fantastic loyalty of a courtier beyond the sterling and honest patriotism of a plain country gentleman. For them, the thing is in course. But on your part, you, Alice—O! on your part, whom I have loved so dearly—who have suffered me to think that my affection was not unrepaid—Can the attractions of an empty title, the idle court compliments of a mere man of quality, during only a few hours, lead you to prefer a libertine lord to such a heart as mine?"

"No, no—believe me, no," said Alice, in the extremity of distress.

"Put your answer, which seems so painful, in one word, and say for *whose* safety it is you are thus deeply interested?"

"For both—for both," said Alice.

"That answer will not serve, Alice," answered Everard—"here is no room for equality. I must and will know to what I have to trust. I understand not the paltering, which makes a maiden unwilling to decide betwixt two suitors; nor would I willingly impute to *you* the vanity that cannot remain contented with one lover at once."

The vehemence of Everard's displeasure, when he supposed his own long and sincere devotion lightly forgotten, amid the addresses of a profligate courtier, awakened the spirit of Alice Lee, who, as we elsewhere said, had a portion in her temper of the lion-humour that was characteristic of her family.

"If I am thus misinterpreted," she said—"if I am not judged worthy of the least confidence or candid construction, hear my declaration, and my assurance, that, strange as my words may seem, they are, when truly interpreted, such as do you no wrong.—I tell you—I tell all present—and I tell this gentleman himself, who well knows the sense in which I speak, that his life and safety are, or ought to be, of more value to me than those of any other man in the kingdom—nay, in the world, be that other who he will."

These words she spoke in a tone so firm and decided, as admitted no farther discussion. Charles bowed low and with gravity, but remained silent. Everard, his features agitated by the emotions which his pride barely enabled him to suppress, advanced to his antagonist, and said,

in a tone which he vainly endeavoured to make a firm one, " Sir, you heard the lady's declaration, with such feelings, doubtless, of gratitude, as the case eminently demands.—As her poor kinsman, and an unworthy suitor, sir, I presume to yield my interest in her to you; and, as I will never be the means of giving her pain, I trust you will not think I act unworthily in retracting the letter which gave you the trouble of attending this place at this hour.—Alice," he said, turning his head towards her, " Farewell, Alice, at once, and for ever!"

The poor young lady, whose adventitious spirit had almost deserted her, attempted to repeat the word farewell, but failing in the attempt, only accomplished a broken and imperfect sound, and would have sunk to the ground, but for Doctor Rochecliffe, who caught her as she fell. Roger Wildrake, also, who had twice or thrice put to his eyes what remained of a kerchief, interested by the lady's evident distress, though unable to comprehend the mysterious cause, hastened to assist the divine in supporting so fair a burthen.

Meanwhile, the disguised Prince had beheld the

whole in silence, but with an agitation to which he was unwonted, and which his swarthy features, and still more his motions, began to betray. His posture was at first absolutely stationary, with his arms folded on his bosom, as one who waits to be guided by the current of events; presently after, he shifted his position, advanced and retired his foot, clenched and opened his hand, and otherwise showed symptoms that he was strongly agitated by contending feelings, was on the point, too, of forming some sudden resolution, and yet still in uncertainty what course he should pursue.

But when he saw Markham Everard, after one look of unspeakable anguish towards Alice, turning his back to depart, he broke out into his familiar ejaculation, "Odds fish! this must not be." In three strides he overtook the slowly-retiring Everard, tapped him smartly on the shoulder, and, as he turned round, said, with an air of command, which he well knew how to adopt at pleasure, "One word with you, sir."

"At your pleasure, sir," replied Everard, and naturally conjecturing the purpose of his antagonist to be hostile, took hold of his rapier with

the left hand, and laid the right on the hilt, not displeased at the supposed call; for anger is at least as much a-kin to disappointment as pity is said to be to love.

"Pshaw!" answered the King, "that cannot be *now*—Colonel Everard, I am CHARLES STUART!"

Everard recoiled in the greatest surprise, and next exclaimed, "Impossible—it cannot be!—The King of Scots has escaped from Bristol.—My Lord Wilmot, your talents for intrigue are well known—but this will not pass upon me."

"The King of Scots, Master Everard," replied Charles—"since you are so pleased to limit his sovereignty—at any rate, the Eldest Son of the late Sovereign of Britain,—is now before you; therefore it is impossible he could have escaped from Bristol. Doctor Rochecliffe shall be my voucher, and will tell you, moreover, that Wilmot is of a fair complexion, and light hair—mine, you may see, is swart as a raven."

Rochecliffe, seeing what was passing, abandoned Alice to the care of Wildrake, whose extreme delicacy in the attempts he made to bring

her back to life, formed an amiable contrast to his usual wildness, and occupied him so much, that he remained for the moment ignorant of the disclosure in which he would have been so much interested. As for Doctor Rochecliffe, he came forward, wringing his hands in all the demonstration of extreme anxiety, and with the usual exclamations attending such a state.

"Peace, Doctor Rochecliffe!" said the King, with such complete self-possession as indeed became a prince—"We are in the hands, I am satisfied, of a man of honour. Master Everard must be pleased in finding only a fugitive prince in the person in whom he thought he had discovered a successful rival. He cannot but be aware of the feelings which prevented me from taking advantage of the cover which this young lady's devoted loyalty afforded me, at the risk of her own happiness. He is the party who is to profit by my candour; and certainly I have a right to expect that my condition, already indifferent enough, shall not be rendered worse by his becoming privy to it, under such circumstances. At any rate, the avowal is made; and it is for Co-

lonel Everard to consider how he is to conduct himself."

"Oh, your Majesty!—my Liege!—my King!—my royal Prince!" exclaimed Wildrake, who, at length discovering what was passing, had crawled on his knees, and seizing the King's hand, was kissing it, more like a child mumbling gingerbread, or a lover devouring the yielded hand of his mistress, than in the manner in which such salutations pass at court—"If my dear friend Mark Everard should prove a dog on this occasion, rely on me I will cut his throat on the spot, were I to do the same for myself the moment afterward!"

"Hush, hush, my good friend and loyal subject," said the King, "and compose yourself; for though I am obliged to put on the Prince for a moment, we have not privacy or safety to receive our subjects in King Cambyses' vein."

Everard, who had stood for a time utterly confounded, awoke at length like a man from a dream.

"Sire," he said, bowing low, and with profound deference, "if I do not offer you the homage of

a subject with knee and sword, it is because God, by whom kings reign, has denied you for the present the power of ascending your throne without rekindling civil war. For your safety being endangered by me, let not such an imagination for an instant cross your mind. Had I not respected your person—were I not bound to you for the candour with which your noble avowal has prevented the misery of my future life, your misfortunes would have rendered your person as sacred, so far as I can protect it, as it could be esteemed by the most devoted royalist in the kingdom. If your plans are soundly considered, and securely laid, think that all which is now passed is but a dream. If they are in such a state that I can aid them, saving my duty to the Commonwealth, which will permit me to be privy to no schemes of actual violence, your Majesty may command my services."

"It may be I may be troublesome to you, sir," said the King; "for my fortunes are not such as to permit me to reject even the most limited offers of assistance; but if I can, I will dispense with applying to you—I would not willingly put

any man's compassion at war with his sense of duty on my account.—Doctor, I think there will be no farther tilting to-day, either with sword or cane; so we may as well return to the Lodge, and leave these"—looking at Alice and Everard —"who may have more to say in explanation."

"No—no!" exclaimed Alice, who was now perfectly come to herself, and partly by her own observation, partly from the report of Dr Rochecliffe, comprehended all that had taken place—"My cousin Everard and I have nothing to explain; he will forgive me for having riddled with him when I dared not speak plainly; and I forgive him for having read my riddle wrong. But my father has my promise—we must not correspond or converse for the present—I return instantly to the Lodge and he to Woodstock, unless you, sire," bowing to the King, "command his duty otherwise.—Instant to the town, Cousin Markham; and if danger should approach, give us warning."

Everard would have delayed her departure, would have excused himself for his unjust suspicion, would have said a thousand things; but she

would not listen to him, saying, for all other answer,—"Farewell, Markham, till God send better days!"

"She is an angel of truth and beauty," said Roger Wildrake; "and I, like a blasphemous heretic, called her a Lindabrides!—But has your Majesty—craving your pardon—no commands for poor Hodge Wildrake, who will blow out his own or any other man's brains in England, to do your Grace a pleasure?"

"We entreat our good friend Wildrake to do nothing hastily," said Charles, smiling; "such brains as his are rare, and should not be rashly dispersed, as the like may not be easily collected. We recommend him to be silent and prudent—to tilt no more with loyal clergymen of the Church of England, and to get himself a new jacket with all convenient speed, to which we beg to contribute our royal aid. When fit time comes, we hope to find other service for him."

As he spoke, he slid ten pieces into the hand of poor Wildrake, who, confounded with the excess of his loyal gratitude, blubbered like a child, and would have followed the King, had not Doc-

tor Rochecliffe, in few words, but peremptory, insisted that he should return with his patron, promising him he should certainly be employed in assisting the King's escape, could an opportunity be found of using his services.

"Be so generous, reverend sir, and you bind me to you for ever," said the cavalier; "and I conjure you not to keep malice against me on account of the foolery you wot of."

"I have no occasion, Captain Wildrake," said the doctor, "for I think I had the best of it."

"Well, then, doctor, I forgive you on my part; and I pray you, for Christian charity, let me have a finger in this good service; for as I live in hope of it, rely that I shall die of disappointment."

While the doctor and soldier thus spoke together, Charles took leave of Everard, who remained uncovered while he spoke to him, with his usual grace—"I need not bid you no longer be jealous of me," said the King; "for I presume you will scarce think of a match betwixt Alice and me, which would be too losing a one on her side. For other thoughts, the wildest libertine could not entertain them towards so high-minded a creature; and believe me, that my sense

of her merit did not need this last distinguished proof of her truth and loyalty. I saw enough of her from her answers to some idle sallies of gallantry, to know with what a lofty character she is endowed. Mr Everard, her happiness I see depends on you, and I trust you will be the careful guardian of it. If we can take any obstacle out of the way of your joint happiness, be assured we will use our influence.—Farewell, sir; if we cannot be better friends, do not at least let us entertain harder or worse thoughts of each other than we have now."

There was something in the manner of Charles that was extremely affecting; something too, in his condition as a fugitive in the kingdom which was his own by inheritance, that made a direct appeal to Everard's bosom—though in contradiction to the dictates of that policy which he judged it his duty to pursue in the distracted circumstances of the country. He remained, as we have said, uncovered; and in his manner testified the highest expression of reverence, up to the point when such might seem a symbol of allegiance. He bowed so low as almost to approach his lips to the hand of Charles—but he did not kiss

it.—"I would rescue your person, sir," he said, "with the purchase of my own life. More——" He stopped short, and the King took up his sentence where it broke off—"More you cannot do," said Charles, "to maintain an honourable consistency—but what you have said is enough. You cannot render homage to my proffered hand as that of a sovereign, but you will not prevent my taking yours as a friend, if you allow me to call myself so—I am sure, as a well-wisher at least."

The generous soul of Everard was touched—He took the King's hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"Oh!" he said, "were better times to come——"

"Bind yourself to nothing, dear Everard," said the good-natured Prince, partaking his emotion—"We reason ill while our feelings are moved. I will recruit no man to his loss, nor will I have my fallen fortunes involve those of others, because they have humanity enough to pity my present condition. If better times come, why we will meet again, and I hope to our mutual satisfaction. If not, as your future father-in-law would say," (a benevolent smile came over his

face, and accorded not unmeetly with his glistening eyes)—"If not, this parting was well made."

Everard turned away with a deep bow, almost choking under contending feelings; the uppermost of which was a sense of the generosity with which Charles, at his own imminent risk, had cleared away the darkness that seemed about to overwhelm his prospects of happiness for life—mixed with a deep sense of the perils by which he was environed. He returned to the little town, followed by his attendant Wildrake, who turned back so often, with weeping eyes, and hands clasped and uplifted as supplicating Heaven, that Everard was obliged to remind him that his gestures might be observed by some one, and occasion suspicion.

The generous conduct of the King during the closing part of this remarkable scene, had not escaped Alice's notice; and, erasing at once from her mind all resentment of Charles's former conduct, and all the suspicions they had deservedly excited, awakened in her bosom a sense of the natural goodness of his disposition, which per-

mitted her to unite regard for his person, with that reverence for his high office in which she had been educated as a portion of her creed. She felt convinced, and delighted with the conviction, that his virtues were his own, his libertinism the fault of education, or rather want of education, and the corrupting advice of sycophants and flatterers. She could not know, or perhaps did not in that moment consider, that in a soil where no care is taken to eradicate tares, they will outgrow and smother the wholesome seed, even if the last is more natural to the soil. For, as Doctor Rochecliffe informed her afterwards for her edification, —promising, as was his custom, to explain the precise words on some future occasion if she would put him in mind—*Virtus rectorem ducemque desiderat; Vitia sine magistro discuntur.**

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* The quotations of the learned doctor and antiquary were often left uninterpreted, though seldom uncommunicated, owing to his contempt for those who did not understand the learned languages, and his dislike to the labour of translation, for the benefit of ladies and of country gentlemen. That fair readers and country thanes may not on this occasion burst in ignorance, we add the meaning of the passage in the text—"*Virtue requires the aid of a governor and director; vices are learned without a teacher.*"

There was no room for such reflections at present. Conscious of mutual sincerity, by a sort of intellectual communication, through which individuals are led to understand each other better, perhaps, in delicate circumstances, than by words, reserve and simulation appeared to be now banished from the intercourse between the King and Alice. With manly frankness, and, at the same time, with princely condescension, he requested her, exhausted as she was, to accept of his arm on the way homeward, instead of that of Doctor Rochecliffe; and Alice accepted of his support with modest humility, but without a shadow of mistrust or fear. It seemed as if the last half hour had satisfied them perfectly with the character of each other, and that each had full conviction of the purity and sincerity of the other's intentions.

Doctor Rochecliffe, in the meantime, had fallen some four or five paces behind; for, less light and active than Alice, (who had, besides, the assistance of the King's support,) he was unable, without effort and difficulty, to keep up with the pace of Charles, who then was, as we

have elsewhere noticed, one of the best walkers in England, and was sometimes apt to forget (as great men will) that others were inferior to him in activity.

"Dear Alice," said the King, but as if the epithet were entirely fraternal, "I like your Everard much—I would to God he were of our determination—But since that cannot be, I am sure he will prove a generous enemy."

"May it please you, sire," said Alice, modestly, but with some firmness, "my cousin will never be your Majesty's personal enemy—and he is one of the few on whose slightest word you may rely more than on the oath of those who profess more strongly and formally. He is utterly incapable of abusing your Majesty's most generous and voluntary confidence."

"On my honour, I believe so, Alice," replied the King: "But odd's fish! my girl, let Majesty sleep for the present—it concerns my safety, as I told your brother lately—Call me sir, then, which belongs alike to king, peer, knight, and gentleman—or rather let me be wild Louis Kerneguy again."

Alice looked down, and shook her head. "That cannot be, please your Majesty."

"What! Louis was a saucy companion—a naughty presuming boy—and you cannot abide him?—Well, perhaps you are right—But we will wait for Doctor Rochecliffe"—he said, desirous, with good-natured delicacy, to make Alice aware that he had no purpose of engaging her in any discussion which could recall painful ideas. They paused accordingly, and again she felt relieved and grateful.

"I cannot persuade our fair friend, Mistress Alice, doctor," said the King, "that she must, in prudence, forbear using titles of respect to me, while there are such very slender means of sustaining it."

"It is a reproach to earth and to fortune," answered the divine, as fast as his recovered breath would permit him, "that your most sacred Majesty's present condition should not accord with the rendering of those honours which are your own by birth, and which, with God's blessing on the efforts of your loyal subjects, I hope to see rendered to you as your hereditary

right, by the universal voice of the three kingdoms."

"True, doctor," replied the King; "but, in the meanwhile, can you expound to Mistress Alice Lee two lines of Horace, which I have carried in my thick head several years, till now, they have come pat to my purpose. As my canny subjects of Scotland say, If you keep a thing seven years you are sure to find a use for it at last—*Telephus*—ay, so it begins—

'*Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,*
Projecit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba.'"

"I will explain the passage to Mistress Alice Lee, when she reminds me of it—or rather," (he added, recollecting that his ordinary dilatory answer ought not to be returned when the order for exposition emanated from his Sovereign,) "I will repeat a poor couplet from my own translation of the poem—

'Heroes and kings, in exile forced to roam,
Leave swelling phrase and seven-leagued words at home.'"

"A most admirable version, doctor," said

Charles: "I feel all its force, and particularly the beautiful rendering of *sesquipedalia verba* into seven-leagued boots—words I mean—it reminds me, like half the things I meet with in this world, of the *Contes de Commere L'Oye*." *

Thus conversing they reached the Lodge; and as the King went to his chamber to prepare for the breakfast summons, now impending, the idea crossed his mind, "Wilmot, and Villiers, and Killigrew, would laugh at me, did they hear of a campaign in which neither man nor woman had been conquered—But odd's fish! let them laugh as they will, there is something at my heart which tells me, that for once in my life I have acted well."

That day and the next were spent in tranquillity, the King waiting impatiently for the intelligence, which was to announce to him that a vessel was prepared somewhere on the coast. None such was yet in readiness; but he learned, that the indefatigable Albert Lee was, at great

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* Tales of Mother Goose.

personal risk, traversing the sea-coast from town to village, and endeavouring to find means of embarkation, among the friends of the royal cause, and the correspondents of Doctor Rochecliffe.

CHAPTER V.

Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch!
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

It is time we should give some account of the other actors in our drama, the interest due to the principal personages having for some time engrossed our attention exclusively.

We are, therefore, to inform the reader, that the lingering longings of the Commissioners, who had been driven forth of their proposed paradise of Woodstock, not by a cherub indeed, but, as they thought, by spirits of another sort, still detained them in the vicinity. They had, indeed, left the little borough under pretence of indifferent accommodation. The more palpable reasons were, that they entertained some resentment

against Everard, as the means of their disappointment, and had no mind to reside where their proceedings could be overlooked by him, although they took leave in terms of the utmost respect. They went, however, no farther than Oxford, and remained there, as ravens, who are accustomed to witness the chase, sit upon a tree or crag, at a little distance, and watch the disembowelling of the deer, expecting the relics which fall to their share. Meantime, the University and City, but especially the former, supplied them with some means of employing their various faculties to advantage, until the expected moment, when, as they hoped, they should either be summoned to Windsor, or Woodstock should once more be abandoned to their discretion.

Bletson, to pass the time, vexed the souls of such learned and pious divines and scholars, as he could intrude his hateful presence upon, by sophistry, atheistical discourse, and challenges to them to impugn the most scandalous theses. Desborough, one of the most brutally ignorant men of the period, got himself nominated the head of a college, and lost no time in cutting down trees, and plun-

dering plate. As for Harrison, he preached in full uniform in Saint Mary's Church, wearing his buff-coat, boots, and spurs, as if he were about to take the field for the fight at Armageddon. And it was hard to say, whether that seat of Learning, Religion, and Loyalty, as it is called by Clarendon, was more vexed by the rapine of Desborough, the cold scepticism of Bletson, or the frantic enthusiasm of the Fifth Monarchy Champion.

Ever and anon, soldiers, under pretence of relieving guard, or otherwise, went and came betwixt Woodstock and Oxford, and maintained, it may be supposed, a correspondence with Trusty Tomkins, who, though he chiefly resided in the town of Woodstock, visited the Lodge occasionally, and to whom, therefore, they doubtless trusted for information concerning the proceedings there.

Indeed, this man Tomkins seemed by some secret means to have gained the confidence in part, if not in whole, of almost every one connected with these intrigues. All closeted him, all conversed with him in private; those who had the means propitiated him with gifts, those who had not were

liberal of promises. When he chanced to appear at Woodstock, which always seemed as it were by accident, if he passed through the hall the knight was sure to ask him to take the foils, and was equally certain to be, after less or more resistance, victorious in the encounter; so, in consideration of so many triumphs, the good Sir Henry almost forgave him the sins of rebellion and puritanism. Then, if his slow and formal step was heard in the passages approaching the gallery, Doctor Rochecliffe, though he never introduced him to his peculiar boudoir, was sure to meet Master Tomkins in some neutral apartment, and to engage him in long conversations, which apparently had great interest for both.

Neither was the Independent's reception below stairs less gracious than above. Joceline failed not to welcome him with the most cordial frankness; the pasty and the flaggon were put in immediate requisition, and good cheer was the general word. The means for this, it may be observed, had grown more plenty at Woodstock since the arrival of Doctor Rochecliffe, who, in quality of agent for several royalists, had various sums of money at his

disposal. By these funds it is likely that Trusty Tomkins also derived his own full advantage.

In his occasional indulgence in what he called a fleshly frailty, (and for which he said he had a privilege,) which was in truth an attachment to strong liquors, and that in no moderate degree, his language, at other times remarkably decorous and reserved, became wild and animated. He sometimes talked with all the unction of an old debauchee of former exploits, such as deer-stealing, orchard robbing, drunken gambols, and desperate affrays in which he had been engaged in the earlier part of his life, sung bacchanalian and amorous ditties, dwelt sometimes upon adventures which drove Phœbe Mayflower from the company, and penetrated even the deaf ears of Dame Jellicot, so as to make the buttery in which he held his carousals no proper place for the poor old woman.

In the middle of these wild rants, Tomkins twice or thrice suddenly ran into religious topics, and spoke mysteriously, but with great animation, and a rich eloquence, on the happy and pre-eminent saints, who were saints, as he termed them, indeed —Men who had stormed the inner treasure-house

of Heaven, and possessed themselves of its choicest jewels. All other sects he treated with the utmost contempt, as merely quarrelling, as he expressed it, like hogs over a trough about husks and acorns; under which derogatory terms, he included alike the usual rites and ceremonies of public devotion, the ordinances of the established churches of Christianity, and the observances, nay, the forbearances, enjoined by every class of Christians. Scarcely hearing, and not at all understanding him, Joceline, who seemed his most frequent confidant on such occasions, generally led him back into some strain of rude mirth, or old recollection of follies before the Civil Wars, without caring about or endeavouring to analyze the opinion of this saint of an evil fashion, but fully sensible of the protection which his presence afforded at Woodstock, and confident in the honest meaning of so free-spoken a fellow, to whom ale and brandy, when better liquor was not to be come by, seemed to be principal objects of life, and who drank a health to the King, or any one else whenever required, provided the cup in which he was to perform the libation were but a brimmer.

These peculiar doctrines, which were enter-

tained by a sect sometimes termed the Family of Love, but more commonly Ranters,* had made some progress in times when such variety of religious opinions were prevalent, that men pushed their jarring heresies to the verge of absolute and most impious insanity. Secrecy had been enjoined on these frantic believers in a most blasphemous doctrine, by the fear of consequences, should they come to be generally announced; and it was the care of Mr Tomkins to conceal the spiritual freedom which he pretended to have acquired, from all whose resentment would have been stirred by his public avowal of them. This was not difficult; for their profession of faith permitted, nay, re-

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* The Familists were originally founded by David George of Delft, an enthusiast, who believed himself the Messiah. They branched off into various sects of Grindletonians, Familists of the mountains, of the valleys; Familists of Cape Order, &c. &c., of the Scattered Flock, &c. &c. Among doctrines, too wild and foul to be quoted, they held the lawfulness of occasional conformity with any predominant sect when it suited their convenience, of complying with the order of any magistrate, or superior power, however sinful. They disowned the principal doctrines of Christianity, as a law which had been superseded by the advent of David George—nay, obeyed the wildest and loosest dictates of evil passions, and are said to have practised among themselves the grossest libertinism. See Edward's *Gangræna*, Pagitt's *Hiereslographia*, and a very curious work written by Ludovic Claxton, one of the leaders of the sect, called the *Lost Sheep Found*,—Small quarto, London, 1660.

quired, their occasional conformity with the sectaries or professors of any creed which chanced to be uppermost.

Tomkins had accordingly the art to pass himself on Dr Rochecliffe as still a zealous member of the Church of England, though serving under the enemy's colours, as a spy in their camp; and as he had on several times given him true and valuable intelligence, this active intriguer was the more easily induced to believe his professions.

Nevertheless, lest this person's occasional presence at the Lodge, which there were perhaps no means to prevent without exciting suspicion, should infer danger to the King's person, Rochecliffe, whatever confidence he otherwise reposed in him, recommended that, if possible, the King should keep always out of his sight, and when accidentally discovered, that he should only appear in the character of Louis Kerneguy. Joseph Tomkins, he said, was, he really believed, Honest Joe; but Honesty was a horse which might be overburthened, and there was no use in leading our neighbour into temptation.

It seemed as if Tomkins himself had acquiesced in this limitation of confidence exercised towards

him, or that he wished to seem blinder than he really was to the presence of this stranger in the family. It occurred to Joceline, who was a very shrewd fellow, that once or twice, when by inevitable accident Tomkins had met Kerneguy, he seemed less interested in the circumstance than he would have expected from the man's disposition, which was naturally prying and inquisitive. "He asked no questions about the young stranger," said Joceline. "God avert that he knows or suspects too much!" But his suspicions were removed, when, in the course of their subsequent conversation, Joseph Tomkins mentioned the King's escape from Bristol as a thing positively certain, and named both the vessel in which he said he had gone off, and the master who commanded her, seeming so convinced of the truth of the report, that Joceline judged it impossible he could have the slightest suspicion of the reality.

Yet notwithstanding this persuasion, and the comradeship which had been established between them, the faithful under-keeper resolved to maintain a strict watch over his gossip Tomkins, and be in readiness to give the alarm should occasion arise.

True, he thought, he had reason to believe that his said friend, notwithstanding his drunken and enthusiastic rants, was as trust-worthy as he was esteemed by Doctor Rochecliffe; yet still he was an adventurer, the outside and lining of whose cloak were of different colours, and a high reward, and pardon for past acts of malignancy, might tempt him once more to turn his tippet—For these reasons Joceline kept a strict, though unostentatious watch over Trusty Tomkins.

We have said, that the discreet seneschal was universally well received at Woodstock, whether in the borough or at the Lodge, and that even Joceline Joliffe was anxious to conceal any suspicions which he could not altogether repress, under a great show of cordial hospitality. There were, however, two individuals, who, for very different reasons, nourished personal dislike against the person so generally acceptable.

One was Nehemiah Holdenough, who remembered, with great bitterness of spirit, the Independant's violent intrusion into his pulpit, and who ever spoke of him in private as a lying missionary, into whom Satan had put a spirit of delusion; and preached, besides, a solemn sermon on the

subject of the false prophet, out of whose mouth came frogs. The discourse was highly prized by the mayor and most of the better class, who conceived that their minister had struck a heavy blow at the very root of Independency. On the other hand, those of the private spirit contended, that Joseph Tomkins had made a successful and triumphant rally, in an exhortation on the evening of the same day, in which he proved, to the conviction of many handicraftsmen, that the passage in Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means," was directly applicable to the Presbyterian system of church government. The clergyman dispatched an account of his adversary's conduct to the Reverend Master Edwards, to be inserted in the next edition of Gangræna, as a pestilent heretic; and Tomkins recommended the parson to his master, Desborough, as a good subject on whom to impose a round fine, for vexing the private spirit; assuring him, at the same time, that though the minister might seem poor, yet if a few troopers were quartered on him till the fine was paid, every rich shopkeeper's wife in the borough would rob the till, rather than want the mammon of un-

righteousness with which to redeem their priest from sufferance; holding, according to his expression, with Laban, "You have taken from me my gods, and what have I more?" There was, of course, little cordiality between the polemical disputants.

But Joe Tomkins was much more concerned at the evil opinion which seemed to be entertained against him by one, whose good graces he was greatly more desirous to obtain than those of Nehemiah Holdenough. This was no other than pretty Mistress Phœbe Mayflower, for whose conversion he had felt a strong vocation, ever since his lecture upon Shakspeare on their first meeting at the Lodge. He seemed desirous, however, to carry on this more serious work in private, and especially to conceal his labours from his friend Joceline Joliffe, lest, perchance, he had been addicted to jealousy. But it was in vain that he plied the faithful damsel, sometimes with verses from the Canticles, sometimes with quotations from Green's Arcadia, or pithy passages from Venus and Adonis, and doctrines of a nature yet more abstruse, from the popular work entitled

Aristotle's Masterpiece. Unto no wooing of his, sacred or profane, metaphysical or physical, would Phœbe Mayflower seriously incline.

The maiden loved Joceline Joliffe, on the one hand; and, on the other, if she disliked Joseph Tomkins when she first saw him, as a rebellious puritan, she had not been at all reconciled by finding reason to regard him as a hypocritical libertine. She hated him in both capacities—never endured his conversation when she could escape from it—and when obliged to remain, listened to him only because she knew he had been so deeply trusted, that to offend him might endanger the security of the family, in the service of which she had been born and bred up, and to whose interest she was devoted. For reasons somewhat similar, she did not suffer her dislike of the steward to become manifest before Joceline Joliffe, whose spirit, as a forester and a soldier, might have been likely to bring matters to an arbitrement, in which the *couteau de chasse* and quarter-staff of her favourite, would have been too unequally matched with the long rapier and pistols which his dangerous rival always carried about his person. But it is

difficult to blind jealousy when there is any cause of doubt; and perhaps the sharp watch maintained by Joceline on his comrade, was prompted not only by his zeal for the King's safety, but by some vague suspicion that Tomkins was not ill-disposed to poach upon his own fair manor.

Phœbe, in the meanwhile, like a prudent girl, sheltered herself as much as possible by the presence of Goody Jellicot. Then, indeed, it is true the Independent, or whatever he was, used to follow her with his addresses to very little purpose; for Phœbe seemed as deaf, through wilfulness, as the old matron by natural infirmity.. This indifference highly incensed her new lover, and induced him anxiously to watch for a time and place, in which he might plead his suit with an energy that should command attention. Fortune, that malicious goddess, who so often ruins us by granting the very object of our vows, did at length procure him such an opportunity as he had long coveted.

It was about sunset, or shortly after, when Phœbe, upon whose activity much of the domestic arrangements depended, went as far as Fair Ro-

samond's spring to obtain water for the evening meal, or rather to gratify the prejudice of the old knight, who believed that celebrated fountain afforded the choicest supplies of the necessary element. Such was the respect in which he was held by his whole family, that to neglect any of his wishes that could be gratified, though with inconvenience to themselves, would, in their estimation, have been almost equal to a breach of religious duty.

To fill the pitcher had, we know, been of late a troublesome task; but Joceline's ingenuity had so far rendered it easy, by repairing rudely a part of the ruined front of the ancient fountain, so that the water was collected, and trickling along a wooden spout, dropped from a height of about two feet. A damsel was thereby enabled to place her pitcher under the slowly dropping supply, and, without toil to herself, might wait till her vessel was filled.

Phœbe Mayflower, on the evening we allude to, saw, for the first time, this little improvement; and, justly considering it as a gallantry of her sylvan admirer, designed to save her the trouble of performing her task in a more inconvenient man-

ner, she gratefully employed the minutes of ease which the contrivance procured her, in reflecting on the good nature and ingenuity of the obliging engineer, and perhaps in thinking he might have done as wisely to have waited till she came to the fountain, that he might have secured personal thanks for the trouble he had taken. But then she knew he was detained in the buttery with that odious Tomkins, and rather than have seen the Independent along with him, she would have renounced the thought of meeting Joceline.

As she was thus reflecting, Fortune was malicious enough to send Tomkins to the fountain, and without Joceline. When she saw his figure darken the path up which he came, an anxious reflection came over the poor maiden's breast, that she was alone, and within the verge of the forest, where in general persons were prohibited to come during the twilight, for disturbing the deer settling to their repose. She encouraged herself, however, and resolved to show no sense of fear, although, as the steward approached, there was something in the man's look and eye no way calculated to allay her apprehensions.

"The blessings of the evening upon you, my pretty maiden," he said. "I meet you even as the chief servant of Abraham, who was a steward like myself, met Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, at the well of the city of Nahor, in Mesopotamia. Shall I not, therefore, say to you, set down thy pitcher that I may drink?"

"The pitcher is at your service, Master Tomkins," she replied, "and you may drink as much as you will; but you have, I warrant, drank better liquor, and that not long since."

It was, indeed, obvious that the steward had arisen from a revel, for his features were somewhat flushed, though he had stopped far short of intoxication. But Phœbe's alarm at his first appearance was rather increased when she observed how he had been lately employed.

"I do but use my privilege, my pretty Rebecca; the earth is given to the saints, and the fulness thereof. They shall occupy and enjoy it, both the riches of the mine, and the treasures of the vine; and they shall rejoice, and their hearts be merry within them. Thou hast yet to learn the privileges of the saints, my Rebecca."

"My name is Phœbe," said the maiden, in order to sober the enthusiastic rapture which he either felt or affected.

"Phœbe after the flesh," he said, "but Rebecca being spiritualized; for art thou not a wandering and stray sheep?—and am I not sent to fetch thee within the fold?—wherefore else was it said, Thou shalt find her seated by the well, in the wood which is called after the ancient harlot, Rosamond?"

"You have found me sitting here sure enough," said Phœbe; "but if you wish to keep me company, you must walk to the Lodge with me; and you shall carry my pitcher for me, if you will be so kind. I will hear all the good things you have to say to me as we go along. But Sir Henry calls for his glass of water regularly before prayers."

"What!" exclaimed Tomkins, "hath the old man of bloody hand and perverse heart sent thee hither to do the work of a bondswoman? Verily thou shalt return enfranchised; and for the water thou hast drawn for him, it shall be poured forth,

even as David caused to be poured forth the water of the well of Bethlem."

So saying, he emptied the water-pitcher, in spite of Phœbe's exclamations and entreaties. He then replaced the vessel beneath the little conduit, and continued:—"Know that this shall be a token to thee. The filling of that pitcher shall be like the running of a sand-glass; and if within the time which shall pass ere it rises to the brim, thou shalt listen to words which I shall say to thee, then it shall be well with thee, and thy place shall be high among those who, forsaking the instruction, which is as milk for babes and sucklings, eat the strong food which nourishes manhood. But if the pitcher shall overbrim with water ere thy ear shall hear and understand, thou shalt then be given as a prey, and as a bondsmaiden, unto those who shall possess the fat and the fair of the earth."

"You frighten me, Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, "though I am sure you do not mean to do so. I wonder how you dare speak words so like the good words in the Bible, when you know how you laughed at your own master, and all the rest

of them—when you helped to play the hobgoblins at the Lodge."

"Think'st thou then, thou simple fool, that in putting that deceit upon Harrison and the rest, I exceeded my privileges?—Nay, verily.—Listen to me, foolish girl. When in former days I lived the most wild, malignant rakehell in Oxfordshire, frequenting wakes and fairs, dancing around May-poles, and showing my lustihood at foot-ball and cudgel-playing—Yea when I was called, in the language of the uncircumcised, Philip Hazeldine, and was one of the singers in the choir, and one of the ringers in the steeple, and served the priest yonder, by name Rochecliffe, I was not farther from the straight road than when, after long reading, I at length found one blind guide after another, all burners of bricks in Egypt. I left them one by one, the poor tool Harrison being the last; and by my own unassisted strength, I have struggled forward to the broad and blessed light, whereof thou too, Phœbe, shalt be partaker."

"I thank you, Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, suppressing some fear under an appearance of indifference; "but I shall have light enough to

carry home my pitcher, would you but let me take it; and that is all the want of light I shall have this evening."

So saying, she stooped to take the pitcher from the fountain; but he snatched hold of her by the arm, and prevented her from accomplishing her purpose. Phœbe, however, was the daughter of a bold forester, prompt at thoughts of self-defence; and though she missed getting hold of the pitcher, she caught up instead a large pebble, which she kept concealed in her right hand.

"Stand up, foolish maiden, and listen," said the Independent sternly; "and know, in one word, that sin, for which the spirit of man is punished with the vengeance of Heaven, lieth not in the corporal act, but in the thought of the sinner. Believe, lovely Phoebe, that to the pure all acts are pure, and that sin is in our thought, not in our action—even as the radiance of the day is dark to a blind man, but seen and enjoyed by him whose eyes receive it. To him who is but a novice in the things of the spirit, much is enjoined, much is prohibited; and he is fed with milk fit for babes, —for him are ordinances, prohibitions, and com-

mands. But the saint is above these ordinances and restraints. To him, as to the chosen child of the house, is given the pass-key to open all locks which withhold him from the enjoyment of his heart's desire. Into such pleasant paths will I guide thee, lovely Phœbe, as shall unite in joy, in innocent freedom, pleasures, which, to the unprivileged, are sinful and prohibited."

"I really wish, Master Tomkins, you would let me go home," said Phœbe, not comprehending the nature of his doctrine, but disliking at once his words and his manner. He went on, however, with the accursed and blasphemous doctrines, which, in common with others of the pretended saints, he had adopted, after having long shifted from one sect to another, until he settled in the vile belief, that sin, being of a character exclusively spiritual, only existed in the thoughts, and that the worst actions were permitted to those who had attained to the pitch of believing themselves above ordinance. "Thus, my Phœbe," he continued, endeavouring to draw her towards him, "I can offer thee more than ever was held out to woman since Adam first took his bride by the

hand. It shall be for others to stand dry-lipped, doing penance, like papists, by abstinence, when the vessel of pleasure pours forth its delights. Doest thou love money?—I have it, and can procure more—am at liberty to procure it on every hand, and by every means—the earth is mine and its fulness. Do you desire power?—which of these poor cheated commissioner-fellows' estates doest thou covet, I will work it out for thee; for I deal with a mightier spirit than any of them. And it is not without warrant that I have aided the malignant Rochecliffe, and the clown Joliffe, to frighten and baffle them in the guise they did. Ask what thou wilt, Phœbe, I can give, or I can procure it for thee—Then enter with me into a life of delight in this world, which shall prove but an anticipation of the joys of paradise hereafter!"

Again the fanatical voluptuary endeavoured to pull the poor girl towards him, while she, alarmed, but not scared out of her presence of mind, endeavoured, by fair entreaty, to prevail on him to release her. But his features, in themselves not marked, had acquired a frightful expression, and he exclaimed, "No, Phœbe—do not think to

escape—thou art given to me as a captive—thou hast neglected the hour of grace, and it has glided past—See, the water trickles over thy pitcher, which was to be a sign between us—Therefore I will urge thee no more with words, of which thou art not worthy, but treat thee as a recusant of offered grace."

"Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, in an imploring tone, "consider, for God's sake, I am a fatherless child—do me no injury, it would be a shame to your strength and your manhood—I cannot understand your fine words—I will think on them till to-morrow." Then, in rising resentment, she added, more vehemently—"I will not be used rudely—stand off, or I will do you a mischief." But, as he pressed upon her with a violence, of which the object could not be mistaken, and endeavoured to secure her right hand, she exclaimed, "Take it, then, with a wanion to you!" —and struck him an almost stunning blow on the face, with the pebble which she held ready for such an extremity.

The fanatic let her go, and staggered backward, half stupified; while Phœbe instantly betook her-

self to flight, screaming for help as she ran, but still grasping the victorious pebble. Irritated to frenzy by the severe blow which he had received, Tomkins pursued, with every black passion in his soul and in his face, mingled with fear lest his villainy should be discovered. He called on Phœbe loudly to stop, and had the brutality to menace her with one of his pistols if she continued to fly. Yet she slacked not her pace for his threats, and he must either have executed them, or seen her escape to carry the tale to the Lodge, had she not unhappily stumbled over the projecting root of a fir-tree. But as he rushed upon his prey, rescue interposed in the person of Joceline Joliffe, with his quarter-staff on his shoulder. "How now, what means this?" he said, stepping between Phœbe and her pursuer. Tomkins, already roused to fury, made no other answer than by discharging at Joceline the pistol which he held in his hand. The ball grazed the under-keeper's face, who, in requital of the assault, and saying "Aha! Let ash answer iron," applied his quarter-staff with so much force to the Independent's head, that, lighting on the left temple, the blow proved almost instantly mortal.

A few convulsive struggles were accompanied with these broken words,—" Joceline—I am gone —but I forgive thee—Doctor Rochecliffe—I wish I had more—Oh!—the clergyman—the funeral-service——" As he uttered these words, indicative, it may be, of his return to a creed, which perhaps he had never abjured so thoroughly as he had persuaded himself, his voice was lost in a groan, which, rattling in the throat, seemed unable to find its way to the air. These were the last symptoms of life: the clenched hands presently relaxed—the closed eyes opened, and stared on the heavens a lifeless jelly—the limbs extended themselves and stiffened. The body, which was lately animated with life, was now a lump of senseless clay—the soul, dismissed from its earthly tenement in a moment so unhallowed, was gone before the judgment-seat.

" Oh, what have you done! what have you done, Joceline!" exclaimed Phœbe; " you have killed the man!"

" Better than he should have killed me," answered Joceline; " for he was none of the blinkers that miss their mark twice running.—And yet

I am sorry for him—Many a merry bout have we had together when he was wild Philip Hazeldine, and then he was bad enough; but since he daubed over his vices with hypocrisy, he seems to have proved worse devil than ever."

"Oh, Joceline, come away," said poor Phœbe, "and do not stand gazing on him thus;" for the woodman, resting on his fatal weapon, stood looking down on the corpse with the appearance of a man half stunned at the event.

"This comes of the ale-pitcher," she continued, in the true style of female consolation, "as I have often told you—For Heaven's sake, come to the Lodge, and let us consult what is to be done."

"Stay first, girl, and let me drag him out of the path; we must not have him lie here in all men's sight—Will you not help me, wench?"

"I cannot, Joceline—I would not touch a lock on him for all Woodstock."

"I must to this gear myself, then," said Joceline, who, a soldier as well as a woodsman, still had great reluctance to the necessary task. Something in the face and broken words of the dying

man had made a deep and terrific impression on nerves not easily shaken. He accomplished it, however, so far as to drag the late steward out of the open path, and bestow his body amongst the under-growth of brambles and briers, so as not to be visible unless particularly looked after. He then returned to Phœbe, who had sate speechless all the while beneath the tree over whose roots she had stumbled.

"Come away, wench," he said, "come away to the Lodge, and let us study how this is to be answered for—the mishap of his being killed will strangely increase our danger.—What had he sought of thee, wench, when you ran from him like a madwoman?—But I can guess—Phil was always a devil among the girls, and I think, as Doctor Rochecliffe says, that, since he turned saint, he took to himself seven devils worse than himself.—Here is the very place where I saw him, with his sword in his hand raised against the old knight, and he a child of the parish—it was high treason at least—but, by my faith, he hath paid for it."

"But, oh, Joceline," said Phœbe, "how could you take so wicked a man into your counsels, and

join him in all his plots about scaring the round-head gentlemen?"

"Why look thee, wench, I thought I knew him at the first meeting, especially when Bevis, who was bred here when he was a dog-leader, would not fly at him; and when we made up our old acquaintance at the Lodge, I found he kept up a close correspondence with Dr Rochecliffe, who was persuaded that he was a good King's man, and held consequently good intelligence with him.—The doctor boasts to have learned much through his means; I wish to Heaven he may not have been as communicative in turn."

"O, Joceline," said the waiting-woman, "you should never have let him within the gate of the Lodge!"

"No more I would, if I had known how to keep him out; but when he went so frankly into our scheme, and told me how I was to dress myself like Robinson the player, whose ghost haunted Harrison—I wish no ghost may haunt me!—when he taught me how to bear myself to terrify his lawful master, what could I think, wench? I only trust the doctor has kept the great secret of all

from his knowledge.—But here we are at the Lodge. Go to thy chamber, wench, and compose thyself. I must seek out Doctor Rochecliffe; he is ever talking of his quick and ready invention. Here come times, I think, that will demand it all."

Phœbe went to her chamber accordingly; but the strength arising from the pressure of danger giving way when the danger was removed, she quickly fell into a succession of hysterical fits, which required the constant attention of Dame Jellicot, and the less alarmed, but more judicious care of Mrs Alice, before they even abated in their rapid recurrence.

The under-keeper carried his news to the politic doctor, who was extremely disconcerted, alarmed, nay angry with Joceline, for having slain a person on whose communications he had accustomed himself to rely. Yet his looks declared his suspicion, whether his confidence had not been too rashly conferred—a suspicion which pressed him the more anxiously, that he was unwilling to avow it, as a derogation from his character for shrewdness, on which he valued himself.

Doctor Rochecliffe's reliance, however, on the fidelity of Tomkins, had apparently good grounds. Before the Civil Wars, as may be partly collected from what has been already hinted at, Tomkins, under his true name of Hazledine, had been under the protection of the Rector of Woodstock, occasionally acted as his clerk, was adistinguished member of his choir, and, being a handy and ingenious fellow, was employed in assisting the antiquarian researches of Dr Rochecliffe through the interior of Woodstock. When he engaged in the opposite side in the Civil Wars, he still kept up his intelligence with the divine, to whom he had afforded what seemed valuable information from time to time. His assistance had latterly been eminently useful in aiding the doctor, with the assistance of Joceline and Phœbe, in contriving and executing the various devices by which the Parliamentary Commissioners had been expelled from Woodstock. Indeed, his services in this respect had been thought worthy of no less a reward than a present of what plate remained at the Lodge, which had been promised to the Independent ac-

cordingly. The doctor, therefore, while admitting he might be a bad man, regretted him as an useful one, whose death, if inquired after, was likely to bring additional danger on a house which danger already surrounded, and which contained a pledge so precious.

CHAPTER VI.

Cassio. That thrust had been my enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou know'st.
Othello.

On the dark October night which succeeded the day on which Tomkins was slain, Colonel Everard, besides his constant attendant Roger Wildrake, had Master Nehemiah Holdenough with him as a guest at supper. The devotions of the evening having been performed according to the Presbyterian fashion, a light entertainment, and a double quart of burnt claret, was placed before his friends at nine o'clock, an hour unusually late. Master Holdenough soon engaged himself in a polemical discourse against sectaries and independents, without being aware that his eloquence was not very interesting to his principal hearer, whose ideas in the meanwhile wandered

to Woodstock and all which it contained—the Prince who lay concealed there—his uncle—above all, Alice Lee. As for Wildrake, after bestowing a mental curse both on Sectaries and Presbyterians, as being, in his opinion, never a barrel the better herring, he stretched out his limbs, and would probably have composed himself to rest, but that he as well as his patron had thoughts which murdered sleep.

The party were waited upon by a little gipsy-looking boy, in an orange-tawney doublet, much decayed, and guarded with blue worsted lace. The rogue looked somewhat stinted in size, but active both in intelligence and in limb, as his black eyes seemed to promise by their vivacity. He was an attendant of Wildrake's choice, who had conferred on him the *nom de guerre* of Spitfire, and had promised him promotion so soon as his young protegé, Breakfast, was fit to succeed him in his present office. It need scarce be said, that the menage was maintained entirely at the expense of Colonel Everard, who allowed Wildrake to arrange the household very much according to his pleasure. The page did not omit, in offering the company wine

from time to time, to accommodate Wildrake with about twice the number of opportunities of refreshing himself which he considered it necessary to afford to the Colonel or his reverend guest.

While they were thus engaged, the good divine lost in his own argument, and the hearers in their private thoughts, their attention was about half past ten arrested by a knocking at the door of the house. To those who have anxious hearts, trifles give cause of alarm.

Even a thing so simple as a knock at the door, may have a character which excites apprehension. This was no quiet gentle tap, intimating a modest intruder; no redoubled rattle, as the pompous annunciation of some vain person; neither did it resemble the formal summons to formal business, nor the cheerful visit of some welcome friend. It was a single blow, solemn and stern, if not actually menacing in the sound. The door was opened by some of the persons of the house; a heavy foot ascended the stair—a stout man entered the room, and drawing the cloak from his face, said, " Markham Everard, I greet thee in God's name."

It was General Cromwell.

Everard, surprised and taken at unawares, endeavoured in vain to find words to express his astonishment. A bustle occurred in receiving the General, assisting him to uncloak himself, and offering in dumb show the civilities of reception. The General cast his keen eye around the apartment, and fixing it first on the divine, addressed Everard as follows:

"A reverend man I see is with thee. Thou art not one of those, good Markham, who let the time unnoted and unimproved pass away.—Casting aside the things of this world—pressing forward to those of the next—it is by thus using our time in this poor seat of terrestrial sin and care, that we may, as it were——But how is this?"—he continued, suddenly changing his tone, and speaking briefly, sharply, and anxiously—"One hath left the room since I entered?"

Wildrake had, indeed, been absent for a minute or two, but was now returned, and stepped forward from a bay window, as if he had been out of sight only, not out of the apartment. "Not

so, sir, I stood but in the back-ground out of respect. Noble General, I hope all is well with the Estate, that your Excellency makes us so late a visit?—Would not your Excellency choose some——"

"Ah!" said Oliver, looking sternly and fixedly at him—"Our trusty Go-between—our faithful confidant—No, sir; at present, I desire nothing more than a kind reception, which, methinks, my friend Markham Everard is in no hurry to give me."

"You bring your own welcome, my Lord," said Everard, compelling himself to speak.—"I can only trust it was no bad news that made your Excellency a late traveller, and ask, like my follower, what refreshment I shall command for your accommodation."

"The State is sound and healthy, Colonel Everard," said the General; "and yet the less so, that many of its members, who have been hitherto workers together, and propounders of good counsel, and advancers of the public weal, have now waxed cold in their love and in their affection for the Good Cause, for which we should

be ready, in our various degrees, to act and do, so soon as we are called to act that whereunto we are appointed, neither rashly, nor over-slothfully, neither lukewarmly nor over-violently, but with such a frame and disposition, in which zeal and charity may, as it were, meet and kiss each other in our streets. Howbeit, because we look back after we have put our hand to the plough, therefore is our force waxed dim."

"Pardon me, sir," said Nehemiah Holdenough, who, listening with some impatience, began to guess in whose company he stood—"Pardon me, for unto this I have a warrant to speak."

"Ah! ah!" said Cromwell. "Surely, most worthy sir, we grieve the spirit when we restrain those pourings forth, which like water from a rock——"

"Nay, therein I differ from you, sir," said Holdenough; "for as there is the mouth to transmit the food, and the profit to digest what Heaven hath sent; so is the preacher ordained to teach, and the people to hear,—the shepherd to gather the flock into the sheepfold, the sheep to profit by the care of the shepherd."

"Ah! my worthy sir," said Cromwell, with much unction—"methinks you verge upon the great mistake, which supposes that churches are tall large houses built by masons, and hearers are men—wealthy men, who pay tithes, the larger, as well as the less; and that the priests, men in black gowns or gray cloaks, who receive the same, are in guerdon the only distributors of Christian blessings—Whereas, in my apprehension, there is more of Christian liberty in leaving it to the discretion of the hungry soul to seek his edification where it can be found, whether from the mouth of a lay teacher, who claimeth his warrant from Heaven alone, or at the dispensation of those who take ordination and degrees from synods and universities, at best but associations of poor sinful creatures like themselves."

"You speak, you know not what, sir," replied Holdenough, impatiently. "Can light come out of darkness, sense out of ignorance, or knowledge of the mysteries of religion from such ignorant mediciners as give poisons instead of wholsesome medicaments, and cram with filth the stomachs of such as seek to them for food?"

This, which the Presbyterian divine uttered rather warmly, the General answered with the utmost mildness.

"Lack-a-day, lack-a-day! a learned man, but intemperate; over-zeal hath eaten him up.—A well-a-day, sir, you may talk of your regular gospel-meals, but a word spoken in season by one whose heart is with your heart, just perhaps when you are riding on to encounter an enemy, or are about to mount a breach, is to the poor spirit like a rasher on the coals, which the hungry shall find preferable to a great banquet, at such times when the full soul loatheth the honey-comb. Nevertheless, although I speak thus in my poor judgment, I would not put force on the conscience of any man, leaving to the learned to follow the learned, and the wise to be instructed by the wise, while poor simple wretched souls are not to be denied a drink from the stream which runneth by the way.—Ay, verily, it will be a comely sight in England when men shall go on as in a better world, bearing with each other's infirmities, joining in each other's comforts—Ay, truly, the rich

drink out of silver flaggons, and goblets of silver —and even so let it be."

Here an officer opened the door and looked in, to whom Cromwell, exchanging the canting drawl, in which it seemed he might have gone on interminably, for the short brief tone of action, called out, "Pearson, is he come?"

"No, sir," replied Pearson; "we have inquired for him at the place you noted, and also at other haunts of his about the town."

"The knave!" said Cromwell, with bitter emphasis; "can he have proved false?—No, no, his interest is too deeply engaged. We shall find him by and by.—Hark thee hither."

While this conversation was going forward, the reader must imagine the alarm of Everard. He was certain that the personal attendance of Cromwell must be on some most important account, and he could not but strongly suspect that the General had some information respecting Charles's lurking-place. If taken, a renewal of the tragedy of the 30th of January was instantly to be apprehended, and the ruin of the whole family

of Lee, with himself probably included, must be the necessary consequence.

He looked eagerly for consolation at Wildrake, whose countenance expressed much alarm, which he endeavoured to bear out with his usual look of confidence. But the weight within was too great; he shuffled with his feet, rolled his eyes, and twisted his hands, like an unassured witness.

Oliver, meanwhile, left his company not a minute's leisure to take counsel together. Even while his perplexed eloquence flowed on in a stream so mazy that no one could discover which way its course was tending, his sharp watchful eye rendered all attempts of Everard to hold communication with Wildrake, even by signs, altogether vain. Everard, indeed, looked for an instant at the window, then glanced at Wildrake, as if to hint there might be a possibility of escape that way. But the cavalier had replied with a disconsolate shake of the head, so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Everard, therefore, lost all hope, and the melancholy feeling of approaching and inevitable evil, was only varied by anxiety concerning the

shape and manner in which it was about to make its approach.

But Wildrake had a spark of hope left. The very instant Cromwell entered he had got out of the room, and down to the door of the house. "Back—back!" repeated by two armed sentinels, convinced him that, as his fears had anticipated, the General had come neither unattended nor unprepared. He turned on his heel, ran up stairs, and meeting on the landing-place the boy whom he called Spitfire, hurried him into the small apartment which he occupied as his own. Wildrake had been shooting that morning, and game lay on the table. He pulled a feather from a woodcock's wing, and saying hastily, "For thy life, Spitfire, mind my orders!—I will put thee safe out at the window into the court—the yard wall is not high—and there will be no sentry there—Fly to the Lodge, as thou wouldst win Heaven, and give this feather to Mistress Alice Lee, if possible—if not, to Joceline Joliffe—say I have won the wager of the young lady. Dost mark me, boy?"

The sharp-witted youth clapped his hand in his master's, and only replied, "Done, and done."

Wildrake opened the window, and, though the height was considerable, he contrived to let the boy down safely by holding his cloak. A heap of straw on which Spitfire lighted rendered the descent perfectly safe, and Wildrake saw him scramble over the wall of the court-yard, at the angle which bore on a back lane; and so rapidly was this accomplished, that the cavalier had just re-entered the room, when, the bustle attending Cromwell's arrival subsiding, his own absence began to be noticed.

He remained during Cromwell's lecture on the vanity of creeds, anxious in mind whether he might not have done better to send an explicit verbal message, since there was no time to write. But the chance of the boy being stopped, or becoming confused with feeling himself the messenger of a hurried and important communication, made him, on the whole, glad that he had preferred a more enigmatical way of conveying the intelligence. He had, therefore, the advantage of his patron, for he was conscious still of a spark of hope.

Pearson had scarce shut the door, when Holdenough, as ready in arms against the future Dic-

tator as he had been prompt to encounter the supposed phantoms and fiends of Woodstock, resumed his attack upon the schismatics, whom he undertook to prove to be at once soul-slayers, false brethren, and false messengers; and was proceeding to allege texts in behalf of his proposition, when Cromwell, apparently tired of the discussion, and desirous to introduce a discourse more accordant with his real feelings, interrupted him, though very civilly, and took the discourse into his own hands.

"Lack-a-day," he said, "the good man speaks truth, according to his knowledge and to his lights—ay, bitter truths, and hard to be digested, while we see as men see, and not with the eyes of angels.—False messengers, said the reverend man?—ay, truly, the world is full of such—You shall see them who will carry your secret message to the house of your mortal foe, and will say to him, Lo! my master is going forth with a small train, by such and such desolate places; be you speedy, therefore, that you may arise and slay him. And another, who knoweth where the foe of your house, and enemy of your person, lies

hidden, shall, instead of telling his master thereof, carry tidings to the enemy even where he lurketh, saying, Lo! my master knoweth of your secret abode—up, now, and fly, lest he come on thee like a lion on his prey.—But shall this go without punishment?" looking at Wildrake with a withering glance. "Now, as my soul liveth, and as He liveth who hath made me a ruler in Israel, such false messengers shall be knitted to gibbets on the way-side, and their right hands shall be extended, pointing out to others the road from which they themselves have strayed!"

"Surely," said Master Holdenough, "it is right to cut off such offenders."

"Thank ye, Mass-John," muttered Wildrake; "when did the Presbyterian fail to lend the devil a shove?"

"But, I say," continued Holdenough, "that the matter is estranged from our present purpose, for the false brethren of whom I spoke are——"

"Right, excellent sir, they be those of our own house," answered Cromwell; "the good man is right once more.—Ay, of whom can we now say that he is a true brother, although he has lain in

the same womb with us?—Although we have struggled in the same cause, eat at the same table, fought in the same battle, worshipped at the same throne, there shall be no truth in him.—Ah, Markham Everard, Markham Everard!"

He paused at this ejaculation; and Everard, desirous at once of knowing how far he stood committed, replied, "Your Excellency seems to have something in your mind in which I am concerned. May I request you will speak it out, that I may know what I am accused of?"

"Ah, Mark, Mark," replied the General, "there needeth no accuser speak when the still small voice speaks within us. Is there not moisture on thy brow, Mark Everard?—Is there not trouble in thine eye?—Is there not a failure in thy frame?—And who ever saw such things in noble and stout Markham Everard, whose brow was only moist after having worn the helmet for a summer's day—whose hand only shook when it had wielded for hours the weighty falchion?—But go to, man! thou doubtest over much. Hast thou not been to me as a brother, and shall I not forgive thee even the seventy-seventh time? The

knave hath tarried somewhere, who should have done by this time an office of much import. Take advantage of his absence, Mark; it is a grace that God gives thee beyond expectance. I do not say, fall at my feet; but speak to me as a friend to his friend."

"I have never said anything to your Excellency that was in the least undeserving the title you have assigned to me," said Colonel Everard, proudly.

"Nay, nay, Markham," answered Cromwell; "I say not you have—But—but you ought to have remembered the message I sent you by that person (pointing to Wildrake); and you must reconcile it with your conscience, how, having such a message, guarded with such reasons, you could think yourself at liberty to expel my friends from Woodstock, being determined to disappoint my object, whilst you availed yourself of the boon, on condition of which my warrant was issued."

Everard was about to reply, when, to his astonishment, Wildrake stepped forward; and with a voice and look very different from his ordinary manner, and approaching a good deal to real dig-

nity of mind, said, boldly and calmly, "You are mistaken, Master Cromwell; and address yourself to the wrong party here."

The speech was so sudden and intrepid, that Cromwell stepped a pace back, and motioned with his right hand towards his weapon, as if he had expected that an address of a nature so unusually bold was to be followed by some act of violence. He instantly resumed his indifferent posture; and, irritated at a smile which he observed on Wildrake's countenance, he said, with the dignity of one long accustomed to see all tremble before him, "This to me, fellow! Know you to whom you speak?"

"Fellow!" echoed Wildrake, whose reckless humour was now completely set afloat—"No fellow of yours, Master Oliver. I have known the day when Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln, a handsome young gallant, with a good estate, would have been thought no fellow of the bankrupt brewer of Huntingdon."

"Be silent!" said Everard; "be silent, Wildrake, if you love your life!"

"I care not a maravedi for my life," said Wild-

rake.—"Zounds, if he dislikes what I say, let him take to his tools! I know, after all, he hath good blood in his veins; and I will indulge him with a turn in the court yonder, had he been ten times a brewer."

"Such ribaldry, friend," said Oliver, "I treat with the contempt it deserves. But if thou hast anything to say touching the matter in question, speak out like a man, though thou look'st more like a beast."

"All I have to say is," replied Wildrake, "that whereas you blame Everard for acting on your warrant, as you call it, I can tell you, he knew not a word of the rascally conditions you talk of. I took care of that; and you may take the vengeance on me, if you list."

"Slave! dare you tell this to *me*!" said Cromwell, still heedfully restraining his passion, which he felt was about to discharge itself upon an unworthy object.

"Ay, you will make every Englishman a slave, if you have your way," said Wildrake, not a whit abashed;—for the awe which had formerly overcome him when alone with this remarkable man,

had vanished, now that they were engaged in an altercation before witnesses.—"But do your worst, Master Oliver; I tell you beforehand, the bird has escaped you."

"You dare not say so!—Escaped?—So ho! Pearson! tell the soldiers to mount instantly.—Thou art a lying fool!—Escaped?—Where, or from whence?"

"Ay, that is the question," said Wildrake; "for look you, sir—that men do go from hence is certain—but how they go, or to what quarter——"

Cromwell stood attentive, expecting some useful hint from the careless impetuosity of the cavalier, upon the route which the King might have taken.

"—Or to what quarter, as I said before, why, your Excellency, Master Oliver, may e'en find that out yourself."

As he uttered the last words he unsheathed his rapier, and made a full pass at the General's body. Had his sword met no other impediment than the buff jerkin, Cromwell's course had ended on the spot. But, fearful of such attempts, the

General wore under his military dress a shirt of the finest mail, made of rings of the best steel, and so light and flexible that it was little or no encumbrance to the motions of the wearer. It proved his safety on this occasion, for the rapier sprung in shivers; while the owner, now held back by Everard and Holdenough, flung the hilt with passion on the ground, exclaiming, "Be damned the hand that forged thee!—To serve me so long, and fail me when thy true service would have honoured us both for ever! But no good could come of thee, since thou wert pointed, even in jest, at a learned divine of the Church of England."

In the first instant of alarm, and perhaps suspecting Wildrake might be supported by others, Cromwell half drew from his bosom a concealed pistol, which he hastily returned, observing that both Everard and the clergyman were withholding the cavalier from another attempt.

Pearson and a soldier or two rushed in—"Secure that fellow," said the General, in the indifferent tone of one to whom imminent danger was too familiar to cause irritation—"Bind him—but

not so hard, Pearson;"—for the men, to show their zeal, were drawing their belts, which they used for want of cords, brutally tight round Wildrake's limbs. "He would have assassinated me, but I would reserve him for his fit doom."

"Assassinated!—I scorn your words, Master Oliver," said Wildrake; "I proffered you a fair duello."

"Shall we shoot him in the street, for an example?" said Pearson to Cromwell; while Everard endeavoured to stop Wildrake from giving further offence.

"On your life, harm him not; but let him be kept in safe ward, and well looked after," said Cromwell; while the prisoner exclaimed to Everard, "I prithee let me alone—I am now neither thy follower, nor any man's, and I am as willing to die as ever I was to take a cup of liquor.—And hark ye, speaking of that, Master Oliver, you were once a jolly fellow, prithee let one of thy lobsters here advance yonder tankard to my lips, and your Excellency shall hear a toast, a song, and a—secret."

"Unloose his head, and hand the debauched

beast the tankard," said Oliver; "while yet he exists, it were shame to refuse him the element he lives in."

"Blessings on your head for once," said Wildrake, whose object in continuing this wild discourse was, if possible, to gain a little delay, when every moment was precious. "Thou hast brewed good ale, and that's warrant for a blessing. For my toast and my song, here they go together—

Son of a witch,
May'st thou die in a ditch,
With the butchers who back thy quarrels;
And rot above ground,
While the world shall resound
A welcome to Royal King Charles.

And now for my secret, that you may not say I had your liquor for nothing—I fancy my song will scarce pass current for much—My secret is, Master Cromwell—that the bird is flown—and your red nose will be as white as your winding-sheet before you can smell out which way."

"Pshaw, rascal," answered Cromwell, contemptuously, "keep your jests for the gibbet foot."

"I shall look on the gibbet more boldly," re-

plied Wildrake, "than I have seen you look on the royal Martyr's picture."

This reproach touched Cromwell to the very quick.—"Villain!" he exclaimed; "drag him hence, draw out a party, and——But hold, not now—to prison with him—let him be close watched, and gagged, if he attempts to speak to the sentinels—Nay, hold—I mean, put a bottle of brandy into his cell, and he will gag himself in his own way, I warrant you—When day comes, that men can see the example, he shall be gagged after my fashion."

During the various breaks in his orders, the General was evidently getting command of his temper; and though he began in fury, he ended with the contemptuous sneer of one who overlooks the abusive language of an inferior. Something remained on his mind notwithstanding, for he continued standing, as if fixed to the same spot in the apartment, his eyes bent on the ground, and his closed hand pressed against his lips, like a man who is musing deeply. Pearson, who was about to speak to him, drew back, and made a sign to those in the room to be silent.

Master Holdenough did not mark, or, at least, did not obey it. Approaching the General, he said, in a respectful but firm tone, "Did I understand it to be your Excellency's purpose that this poor man shall die next morning?"

"Hah!" exclaimed Cromwell, starting from his reverie, "what say'st thou?"

"I took leave to ask, if it was your will that this unhappy man should die to-morrow?"

"Whom said'st thou?" demanded Cromwell: "Markham Everard—shall he die, said'st thou?"

"God forbid!" replied Holdenough, stepping back—"I asked whether this blinded creature, Wildrake, was to be so suddenly cut off?"

"Ay, marry is he," said Cromwell, "were the whole General Assembly of Divines at Westminster—the whole Sanhedrim of Presbytery—to offer bail for him."

"If you will not think better of it, sir, at least give not the poor man," said Holdenough, "the means of destroying his senses—Let me go to him as a divine, to watch with him, in case he may yet be admitted into the vineyard at the latest hour—yet brought into the sheep-fold, though he

has neglected the call of the pastor till time is well nigh closed upon him."

"For God's sake," said Everard, who had hitherto kept silence, because he knew Cromwell's temper on such occasions, "think better of what you do!"

"Is it for thee to teach me?" replied Cromwell; "think thou of thine own matters, and believe me it will require all thy wit.—And for you, reverend sir, I will have no father-confessors attend my prisoners—no tales out of school. If the fellow thirsts after ghostly comfort, as he is much more like to thirst after a quartern of brandy, there is Corporal Humgudgeon, who commands the corps-de-garde, will preach and pray as well as the best of ye.—But this delay is intolerable—Comes not this fellow yet?"

"No, sir," replied Pearson. "Had we not better go down to the Lodge? The news of our coming hither may else get there before us."

"True," said Cromwell, speaking aside to his officer, "but you know Tomkins warned us against doing so, alleging there were so many postern-doors, and sally-ports, and concealed entrances in

the old house, that it was like a rabbit-warren, and that an escape might be easily made under our very noses, unless he were with us, to point out all the ports which should be guarded. He hinted, too, that he might be delayed a few minutes after his time of appointment—but we have now waited half-an-hour."

"Does your Excellency think Tomkins is certainly to be depended upon?" said Pearson.

"As far as his interest goes, unquestionably," replied the General. "He has ever been the pump by which I have sucked the marrow out of many a plot, in special those of the conceited fool Rochecliffe, who is goose enough to believe that such a fellow as Tomkins would value anything beyond the offer of the best bidder. And yet it groweth late—I fear we must to the Lodge without him—Yet, all things well considered, I will tarry here till midnight.—Ah! Everard, thou mightest put this gear to rights if thou wilt! Shall some foolish principle of fantastic punctilio have more weight with thee, man, than have the pacification and welfare of England; the keeping of faith to thy friend and benefactor and who will be yet more so, and

the fortune and security of thy relations? Are these, I say, lighter in the balance than the cause of a worthless boy, who, with his father and his father's house, have troubled Israel for fifty years?"

"I do not understand your Excellency, nor at what service you point, which I can honestly render," replied Everard. "That which is dishonest I should be loath that you proposed."

"Then this at least might suit your honesty, or scrupulous humour, call it which thou wilt," said Cromwell. "Thou knowest, surely, all the passages about Jezebel's palace down yonder.—Let me know how they may be guarded against the escape of any from within?"

"I cannot pretend to aid you in this matter," said Everard; "I know not all the entrances and posterns about Woodstock, and if I did, I am not free in conscience to communicate with you on this occasion."

"We shall do without you, sir," replied Cromwell, haughtily; "and if aught is found which may criminate you, remember you have lost right to my protection."

"I shall be sorry," said Everard, "to have lost

your friendship, General; but I trust my quality as an Englishman may dispense with the necessity of protection from any man. I know no law which obliges me to be spy or informer, even if I were in the way of having opportunity to do service in either honourable capacity."

"Well, sir," said Cromwell, "for all your privileges and qualities, I will make bold to take you down to the Lodge at Woodstock to-night, to inquire into affairs in which the State is concerned. —Come hither, Pearson." He took a paper from his pocket containing a rough sketch or ground-plan of Woodstock Lodge, with the avenues leading to it.—"Look here," he said, "we must move in two bodies on foot, and with all possible silence—thou must march to the rear of the old house of iniquity with twenty file of men, and dispose them around it the wisest thou canst. Take the reverend man there along with you. He must be secured at any rate, and may serve thee as a guide. I myself will occupy the front of the Lodge, and thus having stopt all the earths, thou wilt come to me for farther orders—silence and dispatch is all.—But for the dog Tomkins, who broke

appointment with me, he had need render a good excuse, or woe to his father's son!—Reverend sir, be pleased to accompany that officer.—Colonel Everard, you are to follow me; but first give your sword to Captain Pearson, and consider yourself as under arrest."

Everard gave his sword to Pearson without any comment, and with the most anxious presage of evil followed the Republican General, in obedience to commands which it would have been useless to have disputed.

CHAPTER VII.

" Were my son William here but now,
He wadna fail the pledge."
Wi' that in at the door there ran
A griesly-looking page,
" I saw them, master, O ! I saw,
Beneath the thornie brae,
Of black-mail'd warriors many a rank,
Revenge !" he cried, " and gae."

HENRY MACKENZIE.

THE little party at the Lodge were assembled at supper, at the early hour of eight o'clock. Sir Henry Lee, neglecting the food that was placed on the table, stood by a lamp on the chimney-piece, and read a letter with mournful attention.

" Does my son write to you more particularly than to me, Doctor Rochecliffe ?" said the knight. " He only says here, that he will return probably this night ; and that Master Kerneguy must be ready to set off with him instantly. What can this

haste mean? Have you heard of any new search after our suffering party? I wish they would permit me to enjoy my son's company in quiet but for a day."

"The quiet which depends on the wicked ceasing from troubling," said Dr Rochecliffe, "is connected, not by days and hours, but by minutes. Their glut of blood at Worcester had satiated them for a moment, but their appetite, I fancy, has revived."

"You have news then to that purpose?" said Sir Henry.

"Your son," replied the doctor, "wrote to me by the same messenger: he seldom fails to do so, being aware of what importance it is that I should know everything that passes. Means of escape are provided on the coast, and Master Kerneguy must be ready to start with your son the instant he appears."

"It is strange," said the knight; "for forty years I have dwelt in this house, man and boy, and the point only was how to make the day pass over our heads; for if I did not scheme out some hunting match or hawking, or the like, I might

have sat here on my arm-chair, as undisturbed as a sleeping dormouse, from one end of the year to the other; and now I am more like a hare on her form, that dare not sleep unless with her eyes open, and scuds off when the wind rustles among the fern."

"It is strange," said Alice, looking at Doctor Rochecliffe, "that the roundhead steward has told you nothing of this. He is usually communicative enough of the motions of his party; and I saw you close together this morning."

"I must be closer with him this evening," said the doctor gloomily; "but he will not blab."

"I wish you may not trust him too much," said Alice in reply.—"To me, that man's face, with all its shrewdness, evinces such a dark expression, that methinks I read treason in his very eye."

"Be assured, that matter is looked to," answered the doctor, in the same ominous tone as before. No one replied, and there was a chilling and anxious feeling of apprehension which seem-

ed to sink down on the company at once, like those sensations which make such constitutions as are particularly subject to the electrical influence, conscious of an approaching thunder-storm.

The disguised Monarch, apprised that day to be prepared on short notice to quit his temporary asylum, felt his own share of the gloom which involved the little society. But he was the first also to shake it off, as what neither suited his character nor his situation. Gaiety was the leading distinction of the former, and presence of mind, not depresssion of spirits, was required by the latter.

"We make the hour heavier," he said, "by being melancholy about it. Had you not better join me, Mistress Alice, in Patrick Carey's jovial farewell?—Ah, you do not know Pat Carey—a younger brother of Lord Falkland's?"

"A brother of the immortal Lord Falkland's, and write songs?" said the doctor.

"Oh, doctor, the Muses take tithe as well as the Church," said Charles, "and have their share in every family of distinction. You do not know

the words, Mistress Alice, but you can aid me, notwithstanding, in the burden at least—

> Come now, that we're parting, and 'tis one to ten
> If the towers of sweet Woodstock I e'er see agen,
> Let us e'en have a frolic, and drink like tall men,
> While the goblet goes merrily round."

The song arose, but not with spirit. It was one of those efforts at forced mirth, by which, before all other modes of expressing it, the absence of real cheerfulness is most distinctly intimated. Charles stopt the song, and upbraided the choristers.

"You sing, my dear Mistress Alice, as if you were chanting the seven penitential psalms; and you, good doctor, as if you recited the funeral service."

The doctor rose hastily from the table, and turned to the window; for the expression connected singularly with the task which he was that evening to discharge. Charles looked at him with some surprise; for the peril in which he lived, made him watchful of the slightest motions of those around him—then turned to Sir Henry, and said, "My honoured host, can you tell any

reason for this moody fit, which has so strangely crept upon us all?"

"Not I, my dear Louis," replied the knight; "I have no skill in these nice quillets of philosophy. I could as soon undertake to tell you the reason why Bevis turns round three times before he lies down. I can only say for myself, that if age and sorrow and uncertainty be enough to break a jovial spirit, or at least to bend it now and then, I have my share of them all; so that I, for one, cannot say that I am sad merely because I am not merry. I have but too good cause for sadness. I would I saw my son, were it but for a minute."

Fortune seemed for once disposed to gratify the old man; for Albert Lee entered at that moment. He was dressed in a riding suit, and appeared to have travelled hard. He cast his eye hastily around as he entered. It rested for a second on that of the disguised Prince, and, satisfied with the glance which he received in lieu, he hastened, after the fashion of the olden day, to kneel down to his father, and request his blessing.

"It is thine, my boy," said the old man; a tear springing to his eyes as he laid his hand on the long locks, which distinguished the young cavalier's rank and principles, and which, usually combed and curled with some care, now hung wild and dishevelled about his shoulders. They remained an instant in this posture, when the old man suddenly started from it, as if ashamed of the emotion which he had expressed before so many witnesses, and passing the back of his hand hastily across his eyes, bid Albert get up and mind his supper, "since I dare say you have ridden fast and far since you last baited—and we'll send round a cup to his health, if Doctor Rochecliffe and the good company pleases.—Joceline, thou knave, skink about—thou look'st as if thou had'st seen a ghost."

"Joceline," said Alice, "is sick for sympathy—one of the stags ran at Phœbe Mayflower to-day, and she was fain to have Joceline's assistance to drive the creature off—the girl has been in fits since she came home."

"Silly slut," said the old knight—"She a woodman's daughter!—But, Joceline, if the deer

gets dangerous, you must send a broad arrow through him."

"It will not need, Sir Henry," said Joceline, speaking with great difficulty of utterance—"he is quiet enough now—he will not offend in that sort again."

"See it be so," replied the knight; "remember Mistress Alice often walks in the Chase.—And now fill round, and fill, too, a cup to thyself to over-red thy fear.—Tush, man, Phœbe will do well enough—she only screamed and ran, that thou might'st have the pleasure to help her.—Mind what thou dost, and do not go spilling the wine after that fashion.—Come, here is a health to our wanderer, who has come to us again."

"None will pledge it more willingly than I," said the disguised Prince, unconsciously assuming an importance which the character he personated scarce warranted; but Sir Henry, who had become fond of the supposed page, with all his peculiarities, imposed only a moderate rebuke upon his petulance. "Thou art a merry, good-humoured youth, Louis," he said; "but it is a

world to see how the forwardness of the present generation hath gone beyond the gravity and reverence which in my youth was so regularly observed towards those of higher rank and station —I dared no more have given my own tongue the rein, when there was a doctor of divinity in company, than I would have dared to have spoken in church in service-time."

"True, sir," said Albert, hastily interfering; "but Master Kerneguy had the better right to speak at present, that I have been on his business as well as my own, have seen several of his friends, and bring him important intelligence."

Charles was about to rise and beckon Albert aside, naturally impatient to know what news he had procured, or what scheme of safe escape was now decreed for him. But Doctor Rochecliffe twitched his cloak, as a hint to him to sit still, and not show any extraordinary motive for anxiety, since, in case of a sudden discovery of his real quality, the violence of Sir Henry Lee's feelings might have been likely to attract too much attention.

Charles, therefore, only replied, as to the

knight's stricture, that he had a particular title to be sudden and unceremonious in expressing his thanks to Colonel Lee—that gratitude was apt to be unmannerly—finally, that he was much obliged to Sir Henry for his admonition; and that leave Woodstock when he would, "he was sure to leave it a better man than he came there."

His speech was of course ostensibly directed towards the father; but a glance at Alice assured her, that she had her full share in the compliment.

"I fear," he concluded, addressing Albert, "that you come to tell us our stay here must be very short."

"A few hours only," said Albert—"just enough for needful rest for ourselves and our horses. I have procured two which are good and tried. But Doctor Rochecliffe broke faith with me. I expected to have met some one down at Joceline's hut, where I left the horses; and finding no person, I was delayed an hour in littering them down myself, that they might be ready for to-morrow's work—for we must be off before day."

"I—I—intended to have sent Tomkins—but—but——" hesitated the doctor, "I——"

"The roundheaded rascal was drunk, or out of the way, I presume," said Albert. "I am glad of it—you may easily trust him too far."

"Hitherto he has been faithful," said the doctor, "and I scarce think he will fail me now. But Joceline will go down and have the horses in readiness in the morning."

Joceline's countenance was usually that of alacrity itself on a case extraordinary. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate.

"You will go with me a little way, doctor," he said, as he edged himself closely to Rochecliffe.

"How? puppy, fool, and blockhead," said the knight, "wouldst thou ask Doctor Rochecliffe to bear thee company at this hour?—Out, hound!—get down to the kennel yonder instantly, or I will break the knave's pate of thee."

Joceline looked with an eye of agony at the divine, as if entreating him to interfere in his behalf; but just as he was about to speak, a most melancholy howling arose at the hall door, and a dog was heard scratching for admittance.

"What ails Bevis next?" said the old knight. "I think this must be All-Fools-day, and that everything around me is going mad!"

The same sound startled Albert and Charles from a private conference in which they had engaged, and Albert ran to the hall-door to examine personally into the cause of the noise.

"It is no alarm," said the old knight to Kerneguy, "for in such cases the dog's bark is short, sharp, and furious. These long howls are said to be ominous. It was even so that Bevis's grandsire bayed the whole livelong night on which my poor father died. If it comes now as a presage, God send it regard the old and useless, not the young, and those who may yet serve King and country!"

The dog had pushed past Colonel Lee, who stood a little while at the hall-door to listen if there were anything stirring without, while Bevis advanced into the room where the company were assembled, bearing something in his mouth, and exhibiting, in an unusual degree, that sense of duty and interest which a dog seems to show when he thinks he has the charge of something

important. He entered, therefore, drooping his long tail, slouching his head and ears, and walking with the stately yet melancholy dignity of a war-horse at his master's funeral. In this manner he paced through the room, went straight up to Joceline, who had been regarding him with astonishment, and uttering a short and melancholy howl, laid at his feet the object which he bore in his mouth. Joceline stooped, and took from the floor a man's glove, of the fashion worn by the troopers, having something like the old-fashioned gauntlet projections of thick leather arising from the wrist, which go half way up to the elbow, and secure the arm against a cut with a sword. But Joceline had no sooner looked at what in itself was so common an object, than he dropped it from his hand, staggered backward, uttered a groan, and nearly fell to the ground.

"Now, the coward's curse be upon thee for an idiot!" said the knight, who had picked up the glove, and was looking at it—"thou should'st be sent back to school, and flogged till the craven's blood was switched out of thee—What dost thou look at but a glove, thou base poltroon, and

a very dirty glove, too?—Stay, here is writing—Joseph Tomkins?—why, that is the roundheaded fellow—I wish he hath not come to some mischief—for this is not dirt on the cheveron, but blood—Bevis may have bit the fellow, and yet the dog seemed to love him well too—or the stag may have hurt him—Out, Joceline, instantly, and see where he is—wind your bugle."

"I cannot go," said Joliffe, "unless"—and again he looked piteously at Doctor Rochecliffe, who saw no time was to be lost in appeasing the ranger's terrors, as his ministry was most needful in the present circumstances.—"Get spade and mattock," he whispered to him, "and a dark lantern, and meet me in the wilderness."

Joceline left the room; and the doctor, before following him, had a few words of explanation with Colonel Lee. His own spirit, far from being dismayed on the occasion, rather rose higher, like one whose natural element was intrigue and danger. "Here hath been wild work," he said, "since you parted. Tomkins was rude to the wench Phœbe—Joceline and he had a brawl together, and Tomkins is lying dead in the thicket.

not far from Rosamond's Well. It will be necessary that Joceline and I go directly to bury the body; for besides that some one might stumble upon it, and raise an alarm, this fellow Joceline will never be fit for any active purpose till it is under ground. Though as stout as a lion, the under-keeper has his own weak side, and is more afraid of a dead body than a living one. When do you propose to start to-morrow?"

"By day-break, or earlier," said Colonel Lee; "but we will meet again—A vessel is provided, and I have relays in more places than one—we go off from the coast of Sussex; and I am to get a letter at ———, acquainting me precisely with the spot."

"Wherefore not go off instantly?" said the doctor.

"The horses would fail us," replied Albert—"they have been hard ridden to-day."

"Adieu," said Rochecliffe, "I must to my task—Do you take rest and repose for yours.—To conceal a slaughtered body, and convey on the same night a king from danger and captivity, are two feats which have fallen to few folks save myself;

but let me not, while putting on my harness, boast myself as if I were taking it off after victory." So saying, he left the apartment, and muffling himself in his cloak, went out into what was called the Wilderness.

The weather was a raw frost. The mist lay in partial wreaths upon the lower grounds; but the night, considering that the heavenly bodies were in a great measure hidden by the haze, was not extremely dark. Doctor Rochecliffe could not, however, distinguish the under-keeper, until he had hemmed once or twice, when Joceline answered the signal by showing a glimpse of light from the dark lantern which he carried. Guided by this intimation of his presence, the divine found him leaning against a buttress which had once supported a terrace, now ruinous. He had a pick-axe and shovel, together with a deer's hide hanging over his shoulder.

"What do you want with the hide, Joceline," said Dr Rochecliffe, "that you lumber it about with you on such an errand?"

"Why, look you, doctor," he answered, "it is as well to tell you all about it. The man and I

—he there—you know whom I mean—had many years since a quarrel about this deer. For though we were great friends, and Philip was sometimes allowed by my master's permission to help me in mine office, yet I knew, for all that, Philip Hazeldine was sometimes a trespasser. The deer-stealers were very bold at that time, it being just before the breaking out of the war, when men were becoming unsettled—And so it chanced, that one day, in the Chase, I found two fellows, with their faces blacked, and shirts over their clothes, carrying as prime a buck between them as any was in the park. I was upon them in the instant—one escaped, but I got hold of the other fellow, and who should it prove to be but trusty Phil Hazledine! Well, I don't know whether it was right or wrong, but he was my old friend and pot-companion, and I took his word for amendment in future; and he helped me to hang up the deer on a tree, and I came back with a horse to carry him to the Lodge, and tell the knight the story, all but Phil's name. But the rogues had been too clever for me; for they had flayed and dressed the deer, and quartered him,

and carried him off, and left the hide and horns, with a chime, saying—

> 'The haunch to thee,
> The breast to me,
> The hide and the horns for the keeper's fee.'

And this I knew for one of Phil's mad pranks, that he would play in those days with any lad in the country. But I was so nettled, that I made the deer's hide be curried and dressed by a tanner, and swore that it should be his winding-sheet or mine; and though I had long repented my rash oath, yet now, doctor, you see what it has come to—though I forgot it, the devil did not."

"It was a very wrong thing to make a vow so sinful," said Rochecliffe; "but it would have been greatly worse had you endeavoured to keep it. Therefore, I bid you cheer up," said the good divine; "for in this unhappy case, I could not have wished, after what I have heard from Phœbe and yourself, that you should have kept your hand still, though I may regret that the blow has proved fatal. Nevertheless, thou hast done even that which was done by the great and

inspired legislator, when he beheld an Egyptian tyrannizing over a Hebrew, saving that, in the case present, it was a female, when, says the Septuagint, *Percussum Egyptium abscondit sabulo;* the meaning whereof I will explain to you another time. Wherefore, I exhort you, not to grieve beyond measure; for, although this circumstance is unhappy in time and place, yet, from what Phœbe hath informed me of yonder wretch's opinions, it is much to be regretted that his brains had not been beaten out in his cradle, rather than that he had grown up to be one of those Grindlestonians, or Muggletonians, in whom is the perfection of every foul and blasphemous heresy, united with such an universal practice of hypocritical assentuation, as would deceive their master, even Satan himself."

"Nevertheless, sir," said the forester, "I hope you will bestow some of the service of the church on this poor man, as it was his last wish, naming you, sir, at the same time; and unless this were done, I should scarce dare to walk out in the dark again, for my whole life."

"Thou art a silly fellow—but if," continued

the doctor, "he named me as he departed, and desired the last rites of the church, there was, it may be, a turning from evil and a seeking to good even in his last moments; and if Heaven granted him grace to form a prayer so fitting, wherefore should man refuse it? All I fear is the briefness of time."

"Nay, your reverence may cut the service somewhat short," said Joceline; "assuredly he does not deserve the whole of it; only if something were not to be done, I believe I should flee the country. They were his last words; and methinks he sent Bevis with his glove to put me in mind of them."

"Out, fool!—Do you think," said the doctor, "dead men send gauntlets to the living like knights in a challenge of romance? I tell thee, fool, the cause was natural enough. Bevis, questing about, found the body, and brought the glove to you to intimate where it was lying, and to require assistance; for such is the high instinct of these animals towards one in peril."

"Nay, if you think so, doctor," said Joceline—"and, doubtless, I must say, Bevis took an in-

terest in the man—if indeed it was not something worse in the shape of Bevis, for methought his eyes looked wild and fiery, as if he would have spoken."

As he talked thus, Joceline rather hung back, and, in doing so, displeased the doctor, who exclaimed, "Come along, thou lazy laggard.—Art thou a soldier, and a brave one, and so much afraid of a dead man?—Thou hast killed men in battle, and in chase, I warrant thee."

"Ay, but their backs were to me," said Joceline—"I never saw one of them cast back his head, and glare at me as yonder fellow did, his eye retaining a glance of hatred, mixed with terror and reproach, till it became fixed like a jelly—And were you not with me, and my master's concerns, and something else, very deeply at stake, I promise you I would not again look at him for all Woodstock."

"You must, though," said the doctor, suddenly pausing,—"for here is the place where he lies! Come hither deep into the copse—take care of stumbling—Here is a place just fitting, and we will draw the briers over the grave afterwards."

As the doctor thus issued his directions, he assisted also in the execution of them; and while his attendant laboured to dig a shallow and misshapen grave, a task which the state of the soil, perplexed with roots, and hardened by the influence of the frost, rendered very difficult, the divine read a few passages out of the funeral service, partly in order to appease the superstitious terrors of Joceline, and partly because he held it matter of conscience not to deny the church's rites to one who had requested their aid in extremity.

CHAPTER VIII.

Case ye, case ye, on with your vizards.
Henry IV.

The company whom we had left in Victor Lee's parlour were about to separate for the night, and had risen to take a formal leave of each other, when a tap was heard at the hall door. Albert, the vidette of the party, hastened to open it, enjoining, as he left the room, the rest to remain quiet, until he had ascertained the cause of the knocking. When he gained the portal, he called to know who was there, and what they wanted at so late an hour.

"It is only me," answered a treble voice.

"And what is your name, my little fellow?" said Albert.

"Spitfire, sir," replied the voice without.

"Spitfire!" said Albert.

"Yes, sir," replied the voice; "all the world calls me so, and Colonel Everard himself. But my name is Spittal for all that."

"Colonel Everard! arrive you from him?" demanded young Lee.

"No, sir; I come, sir, from Roger Wildrake, esquire, of Squattlesea-mere, if it like you," said the boy; "and I have brought a token to Mistress Lee, which I am to give into her own hands, if you would but open the door, sir, and let me in—but I can do nothing with a three-inch board between us."

"It is some freak of that drunken rakehell," said Albert, in a low voice, to his sister, who had crept out after him on tiptoe.

"Yet, let us not be hasty in concluding so," said the young lady; "at this moment the least trifle may be of consequence.—What token has Master Wildrake sent me, my little boy?"

"Nay, nothing very valuable neither," replied the boy; "but he was so anxious you should get it, that he put me out of window as one would

chuck out a kitten, that I might not be stopped by the soldiers."

"Hear you?" said Alice to her brother; "undo the gate for God's sake."

Her brother, to whom her feelings of suspicion were now sufficiently communicated, opened the gate in haste, and admitted the boy, whose appearance, not much dissimilar to that of a skinned rabbit in a livery, or a monkey at a fair, would at another time have furnished them with amusement. The urchin messenger entered the hall, making several odd bows and congés, and delivered the woodcock's feather with much ceremony to the young lady, assuring her it was the prize she had won upon a wager about hawking.

"I prithee, my little man," said Albert, "was your master drunk or sober, when he sent thee all this way with a feather at this time of night?"

"With reverence, sir," said the boy, "he was what *he* calls sober, and what I would call concerned in liquor for any other person."

"Curse on the drunken coxcomb!" said Albert.—"There is a tester for thee, boy, and tell

thy master to break his jests on suitable persons, and at fitting times."

"Stay yet a minute," exclaimed Alice; "we must not go too fast—this craves wary walking."

"A feather?" said Albert; "all this work about a feather? Why, Dr Rochecliffe, who can suck intelligence as a magpie would suck an egg, could make nothing of this."

"Let us try what we can do without him then," said Alice. Then addressing herself to the boy, —"So there are strangers at your master's?"

"At Colonel Everard's, madam, which is the same thing," said Spitfire.

"And what manner of strangers?" said Alice; "guests I suppose?"

"Ay, mistress," said the boy, "a sort of guests that make themselves welcome wherever they come, if they meet not a welcome from their landlord—soldiers, madam."

"The men that have been long lying at Woodstock?" said Albert.

"No, sir," said Spitfire, "new comers, with gallant buff-coats and steel breast-plates; and their commander—your honour and her ladyship

never saw such a man—at least I am sure Bill Spitfire never did."

"Was he tall or short?" said Albert, now much alarmed.

"Neither one nor other," said the boy; "stout made, with slouching shoulders; a nose large, and a face one would not like to say No to. He had several officers with him. I saw him but for a moment, but I shall never forget him while I live."

"You are right," said Lee to his sister, pulling her to one side, "quite right—the Arch-fiend himself is upon us!"

"And the feather," said Alice, whom fear had rendered apprehensive of slight tokens, "means flight—and a woodcock is a bird of passage."

"You have hit it," said her brother; "but the time has taken us cruelly short. Give the boy a trifle more—nothing that can excite suspicion, and dismiss him. I must summon Rochecliffe and Joceline."

He went accordingly, but, unable to find those he sought, he returned with hasty steps to the parlour, where, in his character of Louis, the page

was exerting himself to detain the old knight, who, while laughing at the tales he told him, was anxious to go to see what was passing in the hall.

"What is the matter, Albert?" said the old man; "who calls at the Lodge at so undue an hour, and wherefore is the hall door opened to them? I will not have my rules, and the regulations laid down for keeping this house, broken through, because I am old and poor. Why answer you not? why keep a chattering with Louis Kerneguy, and neither of you all the while minding what I say?—Daughter Alice, have you sense and civility enough to tell me, what or who it is that is admitted here contrary to my general orders?"

"No one, sir," replied Alice; "a boy brought a message, which I fear is an alarming one."

"There is only fear, sir," said Albert, stepping forward, "that whereas we thought to have stayed with you to-morrow, we must now take farewell of you to-night."

"Not so, brother," said Alice, "you must stay and aid the defence here—if you and Mas-

ter Kerneguy are both missed, the pursuit will be instant, and probably successful; but if you stay, the biding-places about this house will take some time to search. You can ohange coats with Kerneguy too."

"Right, noble wench," said Albert; "most excellent—yes—Louis, I remain as Kerneguy, you fly as young Master Lee."

"I cannot see the justice of that," said Charles.

"Nor I neither," said the knight, interfering. "Men come and go, lay schemes, and alter them, in my house, without deigning to consult me! And who is Master Kerneguy, or what is he to me, that my son must stay and take the chance of mischief, and this your Scots page is to escape in his dress? I will have no such contrivance carried into effect, though it were the finest cobweb that was ever woven in Doctor Rochecliffe's brains.—I wish you no ill, Louis; thou art a lively boy; but I have been somewhat too lightly treated in this, man."

"I am fully of your opinion, Sir Henry," replied the person whom he addressed. "You have

been, indeed, repaid for your hospitality by want of that confidence, which could never have been so justly reposed. But the moment is come, when I must say, in a word, I am that unfortunate Charles Stuart, whose lot it has been to become the cause of ruin to his best friends, and whose present residence in your family threatens to bring destruction to you, and all around you."

"Master Louis Kerneguy," said the knight, very angrily, "I will teach you to choose the subjects of your mirth better when you address them to me; and, moreover, very little provocation would make me desire to have an ounce or two of that malapert blood from you."

"Be still, sir, for Godsake!" said Albert to his father. "This is indeed THE KING; and such is the danger of his person, that every moment we waste may bring round a fatal catastrophe."

"Good God!" said the father, clasping his hands together, and about to drop on his knees, "has my earnest wish been accomplished! and is it in such a manner as to make me pray it had never taken place!"

He then attempted to bend his knee to the

King—kissed his hand, while large tears trickled from his eyes—then said, " Pardon, my lord—your Majesty, I mean—permit me to sit in your presence but one instant till my blood beats more freely, and then——"

Charles raised his ancient and faithful subject from the ground; and even in that moment of fear and anxiety and danger, insisted on leading him to his seat, upon which he sunk in apparent exhaustion, his head drooping upon his long white beard, and mingling with its silver hairs. Alice and Albert remained with the King, arguing and urging his instant departure.

" The horses are at the under-keeper's hut," said Albert, " and the relays only eighteen or twenty miles off. If the horses can but carry you so far——"

" Will you not rather," interrupted Alice, " trust to the concealments of this place, so numerous and so well tried—Rochecliffe's apartments, and the yet farther places of secrecy?"

" Alas!" said Albert, " I know them only by name. My father was sworn to confide them to but one man, and he had chosen Rochecliffe."

"I prefer taking the field to any hiding-hole in England," said the King. "Could I but find my way to this hut where the horses are, I would try what arguments whip and spur could use to get them to the rendezvous, where I am to meet Sir John Acland and fresh cattle. Come with me, Colonel Lee, and let us run for it. The round-heads have beat us in battle; but if it come to a walk or a race, I think I can show which has the best mettle."

"But then," said Albert, "we lose all the time which may otherwise be gained by defence of this house—leaving none here but my poor father, incapable from his state of doing anything; and you will be instantly pursued by fresh horses, while ours are unfit for the road. Oh, where is the villain Joceline!"

"What can have become of Doctor Rochecliffe?" said Alice; "he that is so ready with advice?—where can they be gone? Oh, if my father could but rouse himself!"

"Your father *is* roused," said Sir Henry, rising and stepping up to them with all the energy of full manhood in his countenance and motions

—"I did but gather my thoughts—but when did they fail a Lee when his King needed counsel or aid?" He then began to speak, with the ready and distinct utterance of a general at the head of an army, ordering every motion for attack and defence—unmoved himself, and his own energy compelling obedience, and that cheerful obedience, from all who heard him. "Daughter," he said, "beat up dame Jellicot—Let Phœbe rise, if she were dying, and secure doors and windows."

"That hath been done regularly since—since we have been thus far honoured," said his daughter, looking at the King;—"yet, let them go through the chambers once more." And Alice retired to give the orders, and presently returned.

The old knight proceeded, in the same decided tone of promptitude and dispatch—"Which is your first stage?"

"Gray's—Rothebury, by Henley, where Sir Thomas Acland and young Knolles are to have horses in readiness," said Albert; "but how to get there with our weary cattle!"

"Trust me for that," said the knight; and pro-

ceeding with the same tone of authority—" Your Majesty must instantly to Joceline's lodge," he said, " there are your horses and your means of flight. The secret places of this house, well managed, will keep the rebel dogs in play two or three hours good—Rochecliffe is, I fear, kidnapped, and his Independent hath betrayed him—Would I had judged the villain better! I would have struck him through with an unbated weapon, as Will says.—But for your guide when on horseback, half a bow-shot from Joceline's hut is that of old Martin the verdurer; he is a score of years older than I, but as fresh as an old oak—beat up his quarters, and let him ride with you for death and life. He will guide you to your relay, for no fox that ever earthed in the Chase knows the country so well for seven leagues around."

" Excellent, my dearest father, excellent," said Albert; " I had forgot Martin the verdurer."

" Young men forget all," answered the knight—" Alas, that the limbs should fail, when the head can best direct them—is come perhaps to its wisest !"

"But the tired horses," said the King—"could we not get fresh cattle?"

"Impossible at this time of night," answered Sir Henry; "but tired horses may do much with care and looking to." He went hastily to the cabinet which stood in one of the oriel windows, and searched for something in the drawers, pulling out one after another.

"We lose time, father," said Albert, afraid that the intelligence and energy which the old man displayed had been but a temporary flash of the lamp, which was about to relapse into evening twilight.

"Go to, sir boy," said his father, sharply; "is it for thee to tax me in this presence!—Know, that were the whole roundheads that are out of hell in present assemblage round Woodstock, I could send away the Royal Hope of England by a way that the wisest of them could never guess. —Alice, my love, ask no questions, but speed to the kitchen, and fetch a slice or two of beef, or better of venison; cut them long, and thin, d'ye mark me——"

"This is wandering of the mind," said Albert

apart to the King. "We do him wrong, and your Majesty harm, to listen to him."

"I think otherwise," said Alice, "and I know my father better than you." So saying she left the room, to fulfil her father's orders.

"I think so, too," said Charles—"in Scotland, the Presbyterian ministers, when thundering in their pulpits on my own sins and those of my house, took the freedom to call me to my face Jeroboam, or Rehoboam, or some such name, for following the advice of young counsellors—Odd's fish, I will take that of the greybeard for once, for never saw I more sharpness and decision than in the countenance of that noble old man."

By this time Sir Henry had found what he was seeking. "In this tin box," he said, "are six balls prepared of the most cordial spices, mixed with medicaments of the choicest and most invigorating quality. Given from hour to hour, wrapt in a covering of good beef or venison, a horse of spirit will not flag for five hours, at the speed of fifteen miles an hour; and, please God, the fourth of the time places your Majesty in safety—what remains may be useful on some

future occasion. Martin knows how to administer them; and helpless Albert's weary cattle shall be ready, if walked gently for ten minutes, in running to devour the way, as old Will says —nay, waste not time in speech, your Majesty does me but too much honour in using what is your own.—Now, see if the coast is clear, Albert, and let his Majesty set off instantly—We will play our parts but ill, if any take the chase after him for these two hours that are between night and day—Change dresses, as you proposed, in yonder sleeping apartment—something may be made of that, too."

"But, good Sir Henry," said the King, "your zeal overlooks a principal point. I have, indeed, come from the under-keeper's hut you mention to this place, but it was by daylight, and under guidance—I shall never find my way thither in utter darkness, and without a guide—I fear you must let the Colonel go with me; and I entreat and command, you will put yourself to no trouble or risk to defend the house—only make what delay you can in showing its secret recesses."

"Rely on me, my royal and liege Sovereign," said Sir Henry, "but Albert *must* remain here, and Alice shall guide your Majesty to Joceline's hut in his stead."

"Alice!" said Charles, stepping back in surprise—"why, it is dark night—and—and—and—" He glanced his eye towards Alice, who had by this time returned to the apartment, and saw doubt and apprehension in her look; an intimation, that the reserve under which he had placed his disposition for gallantry, since the morning of the proposed duel, had not altogether effaced the recollection of his previous conduct. He hastened to put a strong negative upon a proposal which seemed so much to embarrass her. "It is impossible for me, indeed, Sir Henry, to use Alice's services—I must walk as if bloodhounds were at my heels."

"Alice shall trip it," said the knight, "with any wench in Oxfordshire; and what would your Majesty's best speed avail, if you knew not the way to go?"

"Nay, nay, Sir Henry," continued the King,

"the night is too dark—we stay too long—I will find it myself."

"Lose no time in exchanging your dress with Albert," said Sir Henry—"leave me to take care of the rest."

Charles, still inclined to expostulate, withdrew, however, into the apartment where young Lee and he were to exchange clothes; while Sir Henry said to his daughter, "Get thee a cloak, wench, and put on thy thickest shoes. Thou might'st have ridden Pixie, but he is something spirited, and thou art a timid horsewoman, and ever wert so—the only weakness I have known of thee."

"But, my father," said Alice, fixing her eyes very earnestly on Sir Henry's face, "must I really go alone with the King? might not Phœbe, or dame Jellicot, go with us?"

"No—no—no," answered Sir Henry; "Phœbe, the silly slut, has, as you well know, been in fits to-night, and I take it, such a walk as you must take is no charm for hysterics—Dame Jellicot hobbles as slow as a broken-winded mare—besides, her deafness, were there occasion to speak

to her—No—no—you shall go alone—and entitle yourself to have it written on your tomb, 'Here lies she who saved the King!'—And, hark you, do not think of returning to-night, but stay at the verdurer's with his niece—the Park and Chase will shortly be filled with our enemies, and whatever chances here you will learn early enough in the morning."

"And what is it I may then learn?" said Alice—"Alas, who can tell?—O, dearest father, let me stay and share your fate! I will pull off the timorous woman, and fight for the King, if it be necessary. But—I cannot think of becoming his only attendant in the dark night, and through a road so lonely."

"How!" said the knight, raising his voice; "do you bring ceremonious and silly scruples forward, when the King's safety, nay his life, is at stake? By this mark of loyalty," stroking his grey beard as he spoke, "could I think thou wert other than becomes a daughter of the house of Lee, I would——"

At this moment the King and Albert interrupted him by entering the apartment, having

exchanged dresses, and from their stature bearing some resemblance to each other, though Charles was evidently a plain, and Lee a handsome young man. Their complexions were different; but the difference could not be immediately noticed, Albert having adopted a black peruque, and darkened his eyebrows.

Albert Lee walked out to the front of the mansion, to give one turn around the Lodge, in order to discover in what direction any enemies might be approaching, that they might judge of the road which it was safest for the royal fugitive to adopt. Meanwhile the King, who was first in entering the apartment, had heard a part of the angry answer which the old knight made to his daughter, and was at no loss to guess the subject of his resentment. He walked up to him with the dignity which he perfectly knew to assume when he chose it.

"Sir Henry," he said, "it is our pleasure, nay our command, that you forbear all exertion of paternal authority in this matter. Mistress Alice, I am sure, must have good and strong reasons for what she wishes; and I should never par-

don myself were she placed in an unpleasant situation on my account. I am too well acquainted with woods and wildernesses to fear losing my way among my native oaks of Woodstock."

"Your Majesty shall not incur the danger," said Alice, her temporary hesitation entirely removed by the calm, clear, and candid manner in which Charles uttered these last words. "You shall run no risk that I can prevent; and the unhappy chances of the times in which I have lived have from experience made the forest as well known to me by night as by day. So, if you scorn not my company, let us away instantly."

"If your company is given with good will, I accept it with gratitude," replied the monarch.

"Willingly," she said, "most willingly. Let me be one of the first to show that zeal and that confidence, which I trust all England will one day emulously display in behalf of your Majesty."

She uttered these words with an alacrity of spirit, and made the trifling change of habit with a speed and dexterity, which showed that all her fears were gone, and that her heart was entirely

in the mission on which her father had dispatched her.

"All is safe around," said Albert Lee, showing himself; "you may take which passage you will—the most private is the best."

Charles went gracefully up to Sir Henry Lee ere his departure, and took him by the hand.—"I am too proud to make professions," he said, "which I may be too poor ever to realize. But while Charles Stuart lives, he lives the obliged and indebted debtor of Sir Henry Lee."

"Say not so, please your Majesty, say not so," exclaimed the old man, struggling with the hysterical sobs which rose to his throat. "He who might claim all, cannot become indebted by accepting some small part."

"Farewell, good friend, farewell!" said the King; "think of me as a son, a brother to Albert and to Alice, who are, I see, already impatient. Give me a father's blessing, and let me be gone."

"The God, through whom kings reign, bless your Majesty," said Sir Henry, kneeling and turning his reverend face and clasped hands up

to Heaven—"The Lord of Hosts bless you, and save your Majesty from your present dangers, and bring you in his own good time to the safe possession of the crown that is your due!"

Charles received his blessing like that of a father, and Alice and he departed on their journey.

As they left the apartment, the old knight let his hands sink gently as he concluded this fervent ejaculation, his head sinking at the same time. His son dared not disturb his meditation, yet feared the strength of his feelings might overcome that of his constitution, and that he might fall into a swoon. At length, he ventured to approach and gradually touch him. The old knight started to his feet, and was at once the same alert, active-minded, forecasting director, which he had shown himself a little before.

"You are right, boy," he said, "we must be up and doing. They lie, the roundheaded traitors, that call him dissolute and worthless! He hath feelings worthy the son of the blessed Martyr. You saw, even in the extremity of danger, he would have perilled his safety, rather than

take Alice's guidance, when the silly wench seemed in doubt about going. Profligacy is intensely selfish, and thinks not of the feelings of others. But hast thou drawn bolt and bar after them? I vow I scarce saw when they left the hall."

"I let them out at the little postern," said the Colonel; "and when I returned, I was afraid I had found you ill."

"Joy—joy, only joy, Albert—I cannot allow a thought of doubt to cross my breast. God will not desert the descendant of an hundred kings—the rightful Heir will not be given up to the ruffians. There was a tear in his eye as he took leave of me—I am sure of it. Would'st not die for him, boy?"

"If I lay my life down for him to-night," said Albert, "I will only regret it, because I shall not hear of his escape to-morrow."

"Well, let us to this gear," said the knight; "think'st thou that thou know'st enough of his manner, clad as thou art in his dress, to induce the women to believe thee to be the page Kerneguy?"

"Umph," replied Albert, "it is not easy to

bear out a personification of the King, when women are in the case. But there is only a very little light below, and I can try."

"Do so instantly," said his father; "the knaves will be here presently."

Albert accordingly left the apartment, while the knight continued—"If the women be actually persuaded that Kerneguy be still here, it will add strength to my plot—the beagles will open on a false scent, and the royal stag be safe in cover ere they regain the slot of him. Then to draw them on from hiding-place to hiding-place! Why, the east will be gray before they have sought the half of them!—Yes, I will play at bob-cherry with them, hold the bait to their nose which they are never to gorge upon! I will drag a trail for them which will take them some time to puzzle out.—But at what cost do I do this?" continued the old knight, interrupting his own joyous soliloquy—"Oh, Absalom, Absalom, my son! my son!—But let him go; he can but die as his fathers have died, and in the cause for which they lived. But he comes—Hush!—

Albert, hast thou succeeded? hast thou taken royalty upon thee so as to pass current?"

"I have, sir," replied Albert; "the women will swear that Louis Kerneguy was in the house this very last minute."

"Right, for they are good and faithful creatures," said the knight, "and would swear what was for his Majesty's safety at any rate; yet they will do it with more nature and effect, if they believe they are swearing truth.—How didst thou impress the deceit upon them?"

"By a trifling adoption of the royal manner, sir, not worth mentioning."

"Out, rogue!" replied the knight. "I fear the King's character will suffer under your mummery."

"Umph," said Albert, muttering what he dared not utter aloud—"were I to follow the example close up, I know whose character would be in the greatest danger."

"Well, now we must adjust the defence of the outworks, the signals, &c. betwixt us both, and the best way to baffle the enemy for the longest time possible." He then again had recourse to

the secret drawers of his cabinet, and pulled out a piece of parchment, on which was a plan. "This," said he, "is a scheme of the citadel, as I call it, which may hold out long enough after you have been forced to evacuate the places of retreat you are already acquainted with. The ranger was always sworn to keep this plan secret, save from one person only, in case of sudden death.—Let us sit down and study it together."

They accordingly adjusted their measures in a manner which will better show itself from what afterwards took place, than were we to state the various schemes which they proposed, and provisions made against events that did not arrive.

At length young Lee, armed and provided with some food and liquor, took leave of his father, and went and shut himself up in Victor Lee's apartment, from which was an opening to the labyrinth of private apartments, or hiding-places, that had served the associates so well in the fantastic tricks which they had played off at the expense of the Commissioners of the Commonwealth.

"I trust Rochecliffe," said Sir Henry, sitting

down by his desk, after having taken a tender farewell of his son, "has not blabbed out the secret of the plot to yonder fellow Tomkins, who was not unlikely to prate of it out of school.—But here am I seated—perhaps for the last time, with my Bible on the one hand, and old Will on the other, prepared, thank God, to die as I have lived.—I marvel they come not yet," he said, after waiting for some time—"I always thought the devil had a smarter spur to give his agents, when they were upon his own special service."

CHAPTER IX.

> But see, his face is black, and full of blood;
> His eye-balls farther out than when he lived,
> Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man;
> His hair uprear'd—his nostrils stretch'd with struggling;
> His hands abroad display'd, as one who grasp'd
> And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.
>
> *Henry VI.* Part I.

INDEED, had those whose unpleasant visit Sir Henry expected come straight to the Lodge, instead of staying for three hours at Woodstock, they would have secured their prey. But the Familist, partly to prevent the King's escape, partly to render himself of more importance in the affair, had represented the party at the Lodge as being constantly on the alert, and had therefore inculcated upon Cromwell the necessity of his remaining quiet until he (Tomkins) should appear to give him notice that the household were retired to rest. On this condition he undertook, not

only to discover the apartment in which the unfortunate Charles slept, but, if possible, to find some mode of fastening the door on the outside, so as to render flight impossible. He had also promised to secure the key of a postern, by which the soldiers might be admitted into the house without exciting alarm. Nay, the matter might, by means of his local knowledge, be managed, as he represented it, with such security, that he would undertake to place his Excellency, or whomsoever he might appoint for the service, by the side of Charles Stuart's bed, ere he had slept off last night's claret. Above all, he had stated, that, from the style of the old house, there were many passages and posterns which must be carefully guarded, before the least alarm was caught by those within, otherwise the success of the whole enterprise might be endangered. He had therefore besought Cromwell to wait for him at the village, if he found him not there on his arrival; and assured him, that the marching and countermarching of soldiers was at present so common, that even if any news were carried to the Lodge that fresh troops had arrived in the borough, so

ordinary a circumstance would not give them the least alarm. He recommended, that the soldiers chosen for this service should be such as could be depended upon—no fainters in spirit—none who turn back from Mount Gilead for fear of the Amalekites, but men of war, accustomed to strike with the sword, and to need no second blow. Finally, he represented, that it would be wisely done if the General should put Pearson, or any other officer whom he could completely trust, into the command of the detachment, and keep his own person, if he should think it proper to attend, secret even from the soldiers.

All this man's counsels Cromwell had punctually followed. He had travelled in the van of this detachment of one hundred picked soldiers, whom he had selected for the service, men of dauntless resolution, bred in a thousand dangers, and who were steeled against all feelings of hesitation and compassion, by the deep and gloomy fanaticism which was their chief principle of action—men to whom, as their General, and no less as the chief among the Elect, the commands of Oliver were like a commission from the Deity.

Great and deep was the General's mortification at the unexpected absence of the personage on whose agency he so confidently reckoned, and many conjectures he formed as to the cause of such mysterious conduct. Sometimes he thought Tomkins had been overcome by liquor, a frailty to which Cromwell knew him to be addicted; and when he held this opinion, he discharged his wrath in maledictions, which, of a different kind from the oaths and curses of the cavaliers, had yet in them as much blasphemy, and more determined malevolence. At other times he thought some unexpected alarm, or perhaps some drunken cavalier revel, had caused the family of Woodstock Lodge to make later hours than usual. To this conjecture, which appeared the most probable of any, his mind often recurred; and it was the hope that Tomkins would still appear at the rendezvous, which induced him to remain at the borough, anxious to receive communication from his emissary, and afraid of endangering the success of the enterprise by any premature exertion on his own part.

In the meantime, he disposed of everything so as to be ready at a minute's notice. Half his soldiers he caused to dismount, and had the horses put into quarters; the other half were directed to keep their horses saddled, and themselves ready to mount at a moment's notice. The men were brought into the house by turns, and had some refreshment, leaving a sufficient guard on the horses, which was changed from time to time.

Thus Cromwell waited with no little uncertainty, often casting an anxious eye upon Colonel Everard, who, he suspected, could, if he chose it, well supply the place of his absent confidant. Everard endured this calmly, with unaltered countenance, and brow neither ruffled nor dejected.

Midnight at length tolled, and it became necessary to take some decisive step. Tomkins might have been treacherous; or, a suspicion which approached more near to the reality, his intrigue might have been discovered, and he himself murdered, or kidnapped, by the vengeful royalists. In a word, if any use was to be made of the chance which fortune afforded of securing the most formidable claimant of the supreme power,

which he already aimed at, no farther time was to be lost. He at length gave orders to Pearson to get the men under arms—he directed him concerning the mode of forming them, and that they should march with the utmost possible silence; or, as it was given out in the orders, "Even as Gideon marched in silence, when he went down against the camp of the Midianites, with only Phurah his servant. Peradventure," continued this strange document, "we may learn of what yonder Midianites have dreamed."

A single patrol, followed by a corporal and five steady, experienced soldiers, formed the advanced guard of the party; then followed the main body. A rear-guard of ten men guarded Everard and the minister. Cromwell required the attendance of the former, as it might be necessary to examine him, or confront him with others; and he carried Master Holdenough with him, because he might escape if left behind, and raise perhaps some tumult in the village. The Presbyterians, though they not only concurred with, but led the way in the civil war, were at its conclusion highly dis-

satisfied with the ascendancy of the military sectaries, and not to be trusted as cordial agents in anything where their interest was concerned. The infantry being disposed of as we have noticed, marched off from the left of their line, Cromwell and Pearson, both on foot, keeping at the head of the centre, or main body of the detachment. They were all armed with petronels, short guns similar to the modern carabine, and like them used by horsemen. They marched in the most profound silence and with the utmost regularity, the whole body moving like one man.

About one hundred yards behind the rearmost of the dismounted party came the troopers, who remained on horseback; and it seemed as if the very irrational animals were sensible to Cromwell's orders, for the horses did not neigh, and even appeared to place their feet on the earth cautiously and with less noise than usual.

Their leader, full of anxious thoughts, never spoke, save to enforce by whispers his caution respecting silence, while the men, surprised and delighted to find themselves under the command of their renowned General, and destined doubtless

for some secret service of high import, used the utmost precaution in attending to his reiterated orders.

They marched down the street of the little borough in the order we have mentioned. Few of the townsmen were abroad; and one or two who had protracted the orgies of the evening to that unusual hour, were too happy to escape the notice of a strong party of soldiers, who often acted in the character of police, to inquire about their purpose for being under arms so late, or the route which they were pursuing.

The external gate of the Chase had, ever since the party had arrived at Woodstock, been strictly guarded by three file of troopers, to cut off all communication between the Lodge and the town. Spitfire, Wildrake's emissary, who had often been a bird-nesting, or on similar mischievous excursions in the forest, had evaded these men's vigilance, by climbing over a breach, with which he was well acquainted, in a different part of the wall.

Between this party and the advanced guard of Cromwell's detachment, a whispered challenge

was exchanged, according to the rules of discipline. The infantry entered the Park, and were followed by the cavalry, who were directed to avoid the hard road, and ride as much as possible upon the turf which bordered on the avenue. Here, too, an additional precaution was used, a file or two of foot soldiers being detached to search the woods on either hand, and make prisoner, or, in the event of resistance, put to death, any whom they might find lurking there, under what pretence soever.

Meanwhile, the weather began to show itself as propitious to Cromwell, as he had found most incidents in the course of his successful career. The grey mist, which had hitherto obscured everything, and rendered marching in the wood embarrassing and difficult, had now given way to the moon, which, after many efforts, at length forced her way through the vapour, and hung her dim dull cresset in the heavens, which she enlightened, as the dying lamp of an anchorite does the cell in which he reposes. The party were in sight of the front of the palace, when Holdenough whispered to Everard, as they walked near each

other—"See ye not—yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rŏsamond? This night will try whether the devil of the Sectaries or the devil of the Malignants shall prove the stronger. O, sing jubilee, for the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself!"

Here the divine was interrupted by a non-commissioned officer, who came hastily, yet with noiseless steps, to say, in a low stern whisper—"Silence, prisoner in the rear—silence, on pain of death."

A moment afterwards the whole party stopped their march, the word *halt* being passed from one to another, and instantly obeyed.

The cause of this interruption was the hasty return of one of the flanking party to the main body, bringing news to Cromwell that they had seen a light in the wood at some distance on the left.

"What can it be?" said Cromwell, his low stern voice, even in a whisper, making itself distinctly heard. "Does it move, or is it stationary?"

"So far as we can judge, it moveth not," answered the trooper. "Strange—there is no cottage near."

"So please your Excellency, it may be a device of Sathan," said Corporal Humgudgeon, snuffling through his nose; "he is mighty powerful in these parts of late."

"So please your idiocy, thou art an ass," said Cromwell; but, instantly recollecting that the corporal had been one of the adjutators or tribunes of the common soldiers, and was therefore to be treated with suitable respect, he said, "Nevertheless, if it be the device of Satan, please it the Lord we will resist him, and the foul slave shall fly from us.—Pearson," he said, resuming his soldier-like brevity, "take four file, and see what is yonder—No—the knaves may shrink from thee. Go thou straight to the Lodge—invest it in the way we agreed, so that a bird shall not escape out of it—form an outer and an inward ring of sentinels, but give no alarm until I come. Should any attempt to escape, KILL them"—He spoke that command with terrible

emphasis.—"Kill them on the spot," he repeated, "be they who or what they will. Better so, than trouble the Commonwealth with prisoners."

Pearson heard, and proceeded to obey his commander's orders.

Meanwhile, the future Protector disposed the small force which remained with him in such a manner, that they should approach from different points at once the light which excited his suspicions, and gave them orders to creep as near to it as they could, taking care not to lose each other's support, and to be ready to rush in at the same moment, when he should give the sign, which was to be a loud whistle. Anxious to ascertain the truth with his own eyes, Cromwell, who had by instinct all the habits of military foresight, which, in others, are the result of professional education and long experience, advanced upon the object of his curiosity. He skulked from tree to tree with the light step and prowling sagacity of an Indian bush-fighter; and before any of his men were approached so near, he saw, by the lantern which was placed on the ground, two men, who had been engaged in digging what

seemed to be an ill-made grave. Near them lay extended something wrapped in a deer's hide, which greatly resembled the dead body of a man. They spoke together in a low voice, yet so that their dangerous auditor could perfectly overhear what they said.

"It is done at last," said one; "the worst and hardest labour I ever did in my life. I believe there is no luck about me left. My very arms feel as if they did not belong to me; and, strange to tell, work as I would, I could not gather warmth in my limbs."

"I have warmed me enough," said Rochecliffe, breathing short with fatigue.

"But the cold lies at my heart," said Joceline; "I scarce hope ever to be warm again. It is strange, and a charm seems to be on us. Here have we been nigh two hours in doing what Diggen the sexton would have done to better purpose in half a one."

"We are wretched spadesmen enough," answered Doctor Rochecliffe. "Every man to his tools—thou to thy bugle-horn, and I to my pa-

pers in cypher.—But do not be discouraged; it is the frost in the ground, and the number of roots, which rendered our task difficult. And now, all due rites done to this unhappy man, and having read over him the service of the church, *valeat quantum*, let us lay him decently in this place of last repose; there will be small lack of him above ground. So cheer up thy head, man, like a soldier as thou art; we have read the service over his body; and should times permit it, we will have him removed to consecrated ground, though he is all unworthy of such favour. Here, help me to lay him in the earth; we will drag briers and thorns over the spot, when we have shovelled dust upon dust; and do thou think of this chance more manfully; and remember, thy secret is in thine own keeping."

"I cannot answer for that," said Joceline.—"Methinks the very night winds among the leaves will tell of what we have been doing—methinks the trees themselves will say, 'there is a dead corpse lies among our roots.' Witnesses are soon found when blood hath been spilled."

"They are so, and that right early," exclaimed Cromwell, starting from the thicket, laying hold on Joceline, and putting a pistol to his head. At any other period of his life, the forester would, even against the odds of numbers, have made a desperate resistance; but the horror he had felt at the slaughter of an old companion, although in defence of his own life, together with fatigue and surprise, had altogether unmanned him, and he was seized as easily as a sheep is secured by the butcher. Doctor Rochecliffe offered some resistance, but was presently secured by the soldiers who pressed around him.

"Look, some of you," said Cromwell, "what corpse this is upon whom these lewd sons of Belial have done a murder—Corporal Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, see if thou knowest the face."

"I profess I do, even as I should do mine own in a mirror," snuffled the corporal, after looking on the countenance of the dead man by the help of the lantern. "Of a verity it is our trusty brother in the faith, Joseph Tomkins."

"Tomkins!" exclaimed Cromwell, springing

forward and satisfying himself with a glance at the features of the corpse—"Tomkins?—and murdered, as the fracture of the temple intimates!—Dogs that ye are, confess the truth—You have murdered him because you have discovered his treachery—I should say his true spirit towards the Commonwealth of England, and his hatred of those complots in which you would have engaged his honest simplicity."

"Ay," said Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, "and then to misuse his dead body with your papistical doctrines, as if you had crammed cold porridge into its cold mouth. I pray thee, General, let these men's bonds be made strong."

"Forbear, corporal," said Cromwell; "our time presses.—Friend, to you, whom I believe to be Doctor Anthony Rochecliffe by name and surname, I have to give the choice of being hanged at day-break to-morrow, or making atonement for the murder of one of the Lord's people, by telling what thou knowest of the secrets which are in yonder house."

"Truly, sir," replied Rochecliffe, "you found me but in my duty as a clergyman, interring the

dead; and respecting answering your questions, I am determined myself, and do advise my fellow-sufferer on this occasion——"

"Remove him," said Cromwell; "I know his stiffneckedness of old, though I have made him plough in my furrow, when he thought he was turning up his own swathe—Remove him to the rear, and bring hither the other fellow.—Come thou here—this way—closer—closer.—Corporal Grace-be-here, do thou keep thy hand upon the belt with which he is bound. We must take care of our life for the sake of this distracted country, though, lack-a-day, for its own proper worth we could peril it for a pin's point.—Now, mark me, fellow, choose betwixt buying thy life by a full confession, or being tucked presently up to one of these old oaks—How likest thou that?"

"Truly, master," answered the under-keeper, affecting more rusticity than was natural to him, (for his frequent intercourse with Sir Henry Lee had partly softened and polished his manners,) "I think the oak is like to bear a lusty acorn—that is all."

"Dally not with me, friend," continued Oli-

ver; "I profess to thee in sincerity I am no trifler. What guests have you seen at yonder house called the Lodge?"

"Many a brave guest in my day, I'se warrant ye, master," said Joceline. "Ah, to see how the chimneys used to smoke some twelve years back! Ah, sir, a sniff of it would have dined a poor man."

"Out, rascal!" said the General, "doest thou jeer me? Tell me at once what guests have been of late in the Lodge—and look thee, friend, be assured, that in rendering me this satisfaction, thou shalt not only rescue thy neck from the halter, but render also an acceptable service to the State, and one which I will see fittingly rewarded. For, truly, I am not of those who would have the rain fall only on the proud and stately plants, but rather would, so far as my poor wishes and prayers are concerned, that it should also fall upon the lowly and humble grass and corn, that the heart of the husbandman may be rejoiced, and that as the cedar of Lebanon waxes in its height, in its boughs, and in its roots, so may the humble and lowly hyssop that groweth

upon the walls flourish, and—and, truly—Understand'st thou me, knave?"

"Not entirely, if it please your honour," said Joceline; "but it sounds as if you were preaching a sermon, and has a marvellous twang of doctrine with it."

"Then, in one word—thou know'st there is one Louis Kerneguy, or Carnego, or some such name, in hiding at the Lodge yonder?"

"Nay, sir," replied the under-keeper, "there have been many coming and going since Worcester-field; and how should I know who they are?—my service is out of doors, I trow."

"A thousand pounds," said Cromwell, "do I tell down to thee, if thou can'st place that boy in my power."

"A thousand pounds is a marvellous matter, sir," said Joceline; "but I have more blood on my hand than I like already. I know not how the price of life may thrive—and, scape or hang, I have no mind to try."

"Away with him to the rear," said the General; "and let him not speak with his yoke-fellow yonder.—Fool that I am, to waste time in ex-

pecting to get milk from mules.—Move on towards the Lodge."

They moved with the same silence as formerly, notwithstanding the difficulties which they encountered from being unacquainted with the road and its various intricacies. At length they were challenged, in a low voice, by one of their own sentinels, two concentric circles of whom had been placed around the Lodge, so close to each other, as to preclude the possibility of an individual escaping from within. The outer guard was maintained partly by horse upon the roads and open lawn, and where the ground was broken and bushy, by infantry. The inner circle was guarded by foot soldiers only. The whole were in the highest degree alert, expecting some interesting and important consequences from the unusual expedition on which they were engaged.

"Any news, Pearson?" said the General to his aid-de-camp, who came instantly to report to his superior.

He received for answer, "None."

Cromwell led his officer forward just opposite to the door of the Lodge, and there paused be-

twixt the circles of guards, so that their conversation could not be overheard.

He then pursued his inquiry, demanding—"Were there any lights, any appearances of stirring—any attempt at sally—any preparation for defence?"

"All as silent as the valley of the shadow of death—even as the vale of Jehosaphat."

"Pshaw! tell me not of Jehosaphat, Pearson," said Cromwell. "These words are good for others, but not for thee. Say plainly, and like a blunt soldier as thou art. Each man hath his own mode of speech, and bluntness, not sanctity, is thine."

"Well then, nothing has been stirring," said Pearson.—"Yet peradventure——"

"Peradventure not me," said Cromwell, "or thou wilt tempt me to knock thy teeth out. I ever distrust a man when he speaks after another fashion from his own."

"Zounds! let me speak to an end," answered Pearson, "and I will speak in what language your Excellency will."

"Thy Zounds, friend," said Oliver, "show-

eth little of grace, but much of sincerity. Go to then—thou knowest I love and trust thee. Hast thou kept close watch? It behoves us to know that, before giving the alarm."

"On my soul," said Pearson, "I have watched as closely as a cat a mouse-hole—made my rounds as often as any turnspit. It is beyond possibility that anything could have eluded our vigilance, or even stirred within the house without our being aware of it."

"'Tis well," said Cromwell; "thy services shall not be forgotten, Pearson. Thou canst not preach and pray, but thou canst obey thine orders, Gilbert Pearson, and that may make amends."

"I thank your Excellency," replied Pearson; "but I beg to chime in with the humours of the times. A poor fellow hath no right to hold himself singular."

He paused, expecting Cromwell's orders what next was to be done, and, indeed, not a little surprised that the General's active and prompt spirit had suffered him during a moment so critical to cast away a thought upon a circumstance

so trivial as his officer's peculiar mode of expressing himself. He wondered still more, when, by a brighter gleam of moonshine than he had yet enjoyed, he observed that Cromwell was standing motionless, his hands supported upon his sword, which he had taken out of the belt, and his stern brows bent on the ground. He waited for some time impatiently, yet afraid to interfere, lest he should awaken this unwonted fit of ill-timed melancholy into anger and impatience. He listened to the muttering sounds which escaped from the half-opening lips of his principal, in which the words, "hard necessity," which occurred more than once, were all of which the sense could be distinguished. "My Lord General," at length he said, "time flies."

"Peace, busy fiend, and urge me not!"— said Cromwell. "Think'st thou, like other fools, that I have made a paction with the devil for success, and am bound to do my work within an appointed hour, lest the spell should lose its force?"

"I only think, my Lord General," said Pearson, "that Fortune has put into your offer what

you have long desired to make prize of, and that you hesitate."

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, "Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man, who is called like me to work great things in Israel, had need to be, as the poets feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immovable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described, 'an iron man, and made of iron mould'—Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound; and canst thou think it a light thing to me, that, the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son? They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Blood-thirsty Usurper, already, for shedding the

blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoke unto me graciously since that high deed? Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scape-goat of atonement—those who looked on and helped not, bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence; and while I looked that they should shout applause on me, because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor instrument, they look aside to say, 'Ha! ha! the Kingkiller, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate.' —Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude; but when one feeleth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence—in sooth, it is a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear—and God be my witness, that rather than do this new deed, I would shed my own best heart's-blood in a pitched field, twenty against one." Here he fell into a passion of tears, which he sometimes was wont to do. This

extremity of passion was of a singular character. It was not actually the result of penitence, and far less that of absolute hypocrisy, but arose merely from the temperature of that remarkable man, whose deep policy, and ardent enthusiasm, were intermingled with a strain of hypochondriacal passion, which often led him to exhibit scenes of this sort, though seldom, as now, when he was called to the execution of great undertakings.

Pearson, well acquainted as he was with the peculiarities of his General, was baffled and confounded by this fit of hesitation and contrition, by which his enterprising spirit appeared to be so suddenly paralyzed. After a moment's silence, he said, with some dryness of manner, "If this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honour betwixt us."

"Ha!" said Cromwell, as if touched to the quick, "would'st thou take the prey from the lion?"

"If the lion behaves like a village cur," said

Pearson boldly, "who now barks and seems as if he would tear all to pieces, and now flies from a raised stick or a stone, I know not why I should fear him. If Lambert had been here, there had been less speaking and more action."

"Lambert? What of Lambert?" said Cromwell, very sharply.

"Only," said Pearson, "that I long since hesitated whether I should follow your Excellency or him—and I begin to be less certain that I have made the best choice, that's all."

"Lambert!" exclaimed Cromwell impatiently, yet softening his voice lest he should be overheard descanting on the character of his rival,—"What is Lambert?—a tulip-fancying fellow, whom nature intended for a Dutch gardener at Delft or Rotterdam. Ungrateful as thou art, what could Lambert have done for thee?"

"He would not," answered Pearson, "have stood here hesitating before a locked door, when fortune presented the means of securing, by one blow, his own fortune, and that of all who followed him."

"Thou art right, Gilbert Pearson," said Crom-

well, grasping his officer's hand, and strongly pressing it. "Be the half of this bold accompt thine, whether the reckoning be on earth or heaven."

"Be the whole of it mine hereafter," said Pearson, hardily, "so your Excellency have the advantage of it upon earth. Step back to the rear till I force the door—there may be danger, if despair induce them to make a desperate sally."

"And if they do sally, is there one of my ironsides who fear fire or steel less than myself?" said the General. "Let ten of the most determined men follow us, two with halberts, two with petronels, the others with pistols—Let all their arms be loaded, and fire without hesitation, if there is any attempt to resist or to sally forth—Let Corporal Humgudgeon be with them, and do thou remain here, and watch against escape, as thou would'st watch for thy salvation."

The General then struck at the door with the hilt of his sword—at first with a single blow or two, then with a reverberation of strokes that made the ancient building ring again. This

noisy summons was repeated once or twice without producing the least effect.

"What can this mean?" said Cromwell; "they cannot surely have fled, and left the house empty?"

"No," replied Pearson, "I will ensure you against that; but your Excellency strikes so fiercely, you allow no time for an answer. Hark! I hear the baying of a hound, and the voice of a man who is quieting him—Shall we break in at once, or hold parley?"

"I will speak to them first," said Cromwell.—"Hollo! who is within there?"

"Who is it inquires?" answered Sir Henry Lee from the interior; "or what want you here at this dead hour?"

"We come by warrant of the Commonwealth of England," said the General.

"I must see your warrant ere I undo either bolt or latch," replied the knight; "we are enough of us to make good the castle: neither I nor my fellows will deliver it up but upon good quarter and conditions; and we will not treat for these save in fair day-light."

"Since you will not yield to our right, you must try our might," replied Cromwell. "Look to yourselves within, the door will be in the midst of you in five minutes."

"Look to yourselves without," replied the stout-hearted Sir Henry; "we will pour our shot upon you, if you attempt the least violence."

But, alas! while he assumed this bold language, his whole garrison consisted of two poor terrified women; for his son, in conformity with the plan which they had fixed upon, had withdrawn from the hall into the secret recesses of the palace.

"What can they be doing now, sir?" said Phœbe, hearing a noise as it were of a carpenter turning screw-nails, mixed with a low buzz of men talking.

"They are fixing a petard," said the knight, with great composure. "I have noted thee for a clever wench, Phœbe, and I will explain it to thee: 'Tis a metal pot, shaped much like one of the roguish knaves' own sugar-loaf hats, supposing it had narrower brims—it is charged with some few pounds of fine gunpowder. Then——"

"Gracious! we shall be all blown up!" exclaimed Phœbe,—the word gunpowder being the only one which she understood in the knight's description.

"Not a bit, foolish girl. Pack old Dame Jellicot into the embrasure of yonder window," said the knight, "on that side of the door, and we will ensconce ourselves on this, and we shall have time to finish my explanation, for they have bungling engineers. We had a clever French fellow at Newark would have done the job in the firing of a pistol."

They had scarce got into the place of security, when the knight proceeded with his description.—"The petard being formed, as I tell you, is secured with a thick and strong piece of plank, termed the madrier, and the whole being suspended, or rather secured against the gate to be forced—But thou mindest me not?"

"How can I, Sir Henry," she said, "within reach of such a thing as you speak of?—O Lord! I shall go mad with very terror—we shall be crushed—blown up—in a few minutes!"

"We are secure from the explosion," replied

the knight, gravely, "which will operate chiefly in a forward direction into the middle of the chamber; and from any fragments that may fly laterally, we are sufficiently secured by this deep embrasure."

"But they will slay us when they enter," said Phœbe.

"They will give thee fair quarter, wench," said Sir Henry; "and if I do not bestow a brace of balls on that rogue engineer, it is because I would not incur the penalty inflicted by martial law, which condemns to the edge of the sword all persons who attempt to defend an untenable post. Not that I think the rigour of the law could reach Dame Jellicot or thyself, Phœbe, considering that you carry no arms. If Alice had been here she might indeed have done somewhat, for she can use a birding-piece."

Phœbe might have appealed to her own deeds of that day, as more allied to feats of melée and battle, than any which her young lady ever acted; but she was in an agony of inexpressible terror, expecting, from the knight's account of the petard, some dreadful catastrophe, of what nature

she did not justly understand, notwithstanding his liberal communication on the subject.

"They are strangely awkward at it," said Sir Henry; "little Boutirlin would have blown the house up before now.—Ah! he is a fellow would take the earth like a rabbit—if he had been here, never may I stir but he would have countermined them ere now, and

> '——— 'Tis sport to have the engineer
> Hoist with his own petard,'

as our immortal Shakspeare has it."

"Oh, Lord! the poor mad old gentleman," thought Phœbe—"Oh, sir, had you not better leave alone play-books, and think of your end?" uttered she aloud, in sheer terror and vexation of spirit.

"If I had not made up my mind to that many days since," answered the knight, "I had not now met this hour with a free bosom—

> 'As gentle and as jocund as to rest,
> Go I to death—truth hath a quiet breast.'"

As he spoke, a broad glare of light flashed from without through the windows of the hall,

and betwixt the strong iron stanchions with which they were secured—a broad discoloured light it was, which shed a red and dusky illumination on the old armour and weapons, as if it had been the reflection of a conflagration. Phœbe screamed aloud, and forgetful of reverence in the moment of passion, clung close to the knight's cloak and arm, while Dame Jellicot, from her solitary niche, having the use of her eyes, though bereft of her hearing, yelled like an owl when the moon breaks out suddenly.

"Take care, good Phœbe," said the knight; "you will prevent my using my weapon if you hang upon me thus.—The bungling fools cannot fix their petard without the use of torches! Now let me take the advantage of this interval.—Remember what I told thee, and how to put off time."

"Oh, Lord—ay, sir," said Phœbe, "I will say anything. Oh Lord, that it were but over! —Ah! ah!—(two prolonged screams)—I hear something hissing like a serpent."

"It is the fuse, as we martialists call it," replied the knight; "that is, Phœbe, the match

which fires the petard, and which is longer or shorter, according to the distance."

Here the knight's discourse was cut short by a dreadful explosion, which, as he had foretold, shattered the door, strong as it was, to pieces, and brought down the glass clattering from the windows, with all the painted heroes and heroines, who had been recorded on that fragile place of memory for centuries. The women shrieked incessantly, and were answered by the bellowing of Bevis, though shut up at a distance from the scene of action. The knight, shaking Phœbe from him with difficulty, advanced into the hall to meet those who rushed in, with torches lighted, and weapons prepared.

"Death to all who resist—life to those who surrender!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. "Who commands this garrison?"

"Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley," answered the old knight, stepping forward; "who, having no other garrison than two weak women, is compelled to submit to what he would willingly have resisted."

"Disarm the inveterate and malignant rebel,"

cried Oliver. "Art thou not ashamed, sir, to detain me before the door of a house which you had no force to defend? Wearest thou so white a beard, and knowest thou not, that to refuse surrendering an indefensible post, by the martial law, deserves hanging?"

"My beard and I," said Sir Henry, "have settled that matter between us, and agree right cordially. It is better to run the risk of being hanged, like honest men, than to give up our trust like cowards and traitors."

"Ha! say'st thou?" said Cromwell; "thou hast powerful motives, I doubt not, for running thy head into a noose. But I will speak with thee by and by.—Ho! Pearson, Gilbert Pearson, take this scroll—Take the elder woman with thee—Let her guide you to the various places therein mentioned—Search every room therein set down, and arrest, or slay upon the slightest resistance, whomsoever you find there. Then note those places marked as commanding points for cutting off intercourse through the mansion—the landing-places of the great staircase, the great gallery, and so forth. Use the woman civilly. The plan an-

nexed to the scroll will point out the posts, even if she prove stupid or refractory. Meanwhile, the corporal, with a party, will bring the old man and the girl there to some apartment—the parlour, I think, called Victor Lee's, will do as well as another. We will then be out of this stifling smell of gunpowder."

So saying, and without requiring any further assistance or guidance, he walked towards the apartment he had named. Sir Henry had his own feelings, when he saw the unhesitating decision with which the General led the way, and which seemed to intimate a more complete acquaintance with the various localities of Woodstock than was consistent with his own present design, to engage the Commonwealth party in a fruitless search through the intricacies of the Lodge.

"I will now ask thee a few questions, old man," said the General, when they had arrived in the room; "and I warn thee, that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth, can be no otherwise merited than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask."

Sir Henry bowed. He would have spoken, but he felt his temper rising high, and became afraid it might be exhausted before the part he had settled to play, in order to afford the King time for his escape, should be brought to an end.

"What household have you had here, Sir Henry Lee, within these few days—what guests—what visitors? We know that your means of housekeeping are not so profuse as usual, so the catalogue cannot be burdensome to your memory."

"Far from it," replied the knight, with unusual command of temper; "my daughter, and latterly my son, have been my guests; and I have had these females, and one Joceline Joliffe, to attend upon us."

"I do not ask after the regular members of your household, but after those who have been within your gates, either as guests, or as malignant fugitives taking shelter?"

"There may have been more of both kinds, sir, than I, if it please your valour, am able to answer for," replied the knight.—"I remember my kinsman Everard was here one morning—

Also, I bethink me, a follower of his, called Wildrake."

"Did you not also receive a young cavalier, called Louis Garnegey?" said Cromwell.

"I remember no such name, were I to hang for it," said the knight.

"Kerneguy, or some such word," said the General; "we will not quarrel for a sound."

"A Scotch lad, called Louis Kerneguy, was a guest of mine," said Sir Henry, "and left me this morning for Dorsetshire."

"So late!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot—"How fate contrives to baffle us, even when she seems most favourable!—What direction did he take, old man?" continued Cromwell—"what horse did he ride—who went with him?"

"My son went with him," replied the knight; "he brought him here as the son of a Scottish lord.—I pray you, sir, to be finished with these questions; for although I owe thee, as Will Shakspeare says,

> 'Respect for thy great place, and let the devil
> Be sometimes honour'd for his burning throne,'—

yet I feel my patience wearing thin."

Cromwell here whispered to the corporal, who in turn uttered orders to two soldiers, who left the room. "Place the knight aside; we will now examine the servant damsel," said the General.—"Dost thou know," said he to Phœbe, "of the presence of one Louis Kerneguy, calling himself a Scotch page, who came here a few days since?"

"Surely, sir," she replied, "I cannot easily forget him; and I warrant no well-looking wench that comes into his way will be like to forget him either."

"Aha," said Cromwell, "say'st thou so? truly I believe the woman will prove the truer witness —When did he leave this house?"

"Nay, I know nothing of his movements, not I," said Phœbe; "I am only glad to keep out of his way. But if he have actually gone hence, I am sure he was here some two hours since, for he crossed me in the lower passage, between the hall and the kitchen."

"How did you know it was he?" demanded Cromwell.

"By a rude enough token," said Phœbe.—

"La, sir, you do ask such questions!" she added, hanging down her head.

Humgudgeon here interfered, taking upon himself the freedom of a coadjutor. "Verily," he said, "if what the damsel is called to speak upon hath aught unseemly, I crave your Excellency's permission to withdraw, not desiring that my nightly meditations may be disturbed with tales of such a nature."

"Nay, your honour," said Phœbe, "I scorn the old man's words, in the way of seemliness or unseemliness either. Master Louis did but snatch a kiss, that is the truth of it, if it must be told."

Here Humgudgeon groaned deeply, while his Excellency avoided laughing with some difficulty. "Thou hast given excellent tokens, Phœbe," he said; "and if they be true, as I think they seem to be, thou shalt not lack thy reward.—And here comes our spy from the stables."

"There are not the least signs," said the trooper, "that horses have been in the stables for a month—there is no litter in the stalls, no hay in the racks, the corn-binns are empty, and the mangers are full of cobwebs."

"Ay, ay," said the old knight," "I have seen when I kept twenty good horses in these stalls, with many a groom and stable-boy to attend them."

"In the meanwhile," said Cromwell, "their present state tells little for the truth of your own story, that there were horses to-day, on which this Kerneguy and your son fled from justice."

"I did not say that the horses were kept there," said the knight. "I have horses and stables elsewhere."

"Fie, fie, for shame, for shame!" said the General; "can a white-bearded man, I ask it once more, be a false witness?"

"Faith, sir," said Sir Henry Lee, "it is a thriving trade, and I wonder not that you who live on it are so severe in prosecuting interlopers. But it is the times, and those who rule the times, that make grey-beards deceivers."

"Thou art facetious, friend, as well as daring, in thy malignancy," said Cromwell; "but credit me, I will cry quittance with you ere I am done. Whereunto lead these doors?"

"To bed-rooms," answered the knight.

"Bed-rooms! only to bed-rooms?" said the Republican General, in a voice which indicated, such was the internal occupation of his thoughts, that he had not fully understood the answer.

"Lord, sir," said the knight, "why should you make it so strange? I say these doors lead to bed-rooms—to places where honest men sleep, and rogues lie awake."

"You are running up a farther account, Sir Henry," said the General; "but we will balance it once and for all."

During the whole of the scene, Cromwell, whatever might be the internal uncertainty of his mind, maintained the most strict temperance in language and manner, just as if he had no farther interest in what was passing, than as a military man employed in discharging the duty enjoined him by his superiors. But the restraint upon his passion was but

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."*

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* But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.
CAMPBELL'S *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

The course of his resolution was hurried on even more forcibly, because no violence of expression attended or announced its current. He threw himself into a chair, with a countenance that indicated no indecision of mind, but a determination which awaited only the signal for action. Meanwhile the knight, as if resolved in nothing to forego the privileges of his rank and place, sat himself down in turn, and putting on his hat which lay on a table, regarded the General with a calm look of fearless indifference. The soldiers stood around, some holding the torches, which illuminated the apartment with a lurid and sombre glare of light, the others resting upon their weapons. Phœbe, with her hands folded, her eyes turned upwards till the pupils were scarce visible, and every shade of colour banished from her ruddy cheek, stood like one in immediate apprehension of the sentence of death being pronounced, and instant execution commanded.

Heavy steps were at last heard, and Pearson and some of the soldiers returned. This seemed to be what Cromwell waited for. He started up,

and asked hastily, "Any news, Pearson? any prisoners—any malignants slain in thy defence?"

"None, so please your Excellency," said the officer.

"And are thy sentinels all carefully placed, as Tomkins's scroll gave direction, and with fitting orders?"

"With the most deliberate care," said Pearson.

"Art thou very sure," said Cromwell, pulling him a little to one side, "that this is all well and duly cared for? Bethink thee, that when we engage ourselves in the private communications, all will be lost should the party we look for have the means of dodging us by an escape into the more open rooms, and from thence perhaps into the forest."

"My Lord General," answered Pearson, "if placing the guards on the places pointed out in this scroll be sufficient, with the strictest orders to stop, and, if necessary, to stab or shoot, whoever crosses their post, such orders are given to men who will not fail to execute them. If more is necessary, your Excellency has only to speak."

"No—no—no, Pearson," said the General, "thou hast done well.—This night over, and let it end but as we hope, thy reward shall not be awanting.—And now to business.—Sir Henry Lee, undo me the secret spring of yonder picture of your ancestor—Nay, spare yourself the trouble and guilt of falsehood or equivocation, and, I say, undo me that spring presently."

"When I acknowledge you for my master, and wear your livery, I may obey your commands," answered the knight; "even then I would need first to understand them."

"Wench," said Cromwell, addressing Phœbe, "go thou undo the spring—you could do it fast enough when you aided at the gambols of the demons of Woodstock, and terrified even Mark Everard, who, I judged, had more sense."

"Oh, Lord, sir, what shall I do?" said Phœbe, looking to the knight; "they know all about it. What shall I do!"

"For thy life, hold out to the last, wench! Every minute is worth a million."

"Ha! heard you that, Pearson?" said Cromwell to the officer; then stamping with his foot,

he added, "Undo the spring, or I will else use levers and wrenching-irons—Or, ha!—another petard were well bestowed—Call the engineer."

"Oh, Lord, sir," cried Phœbe, "I shall never live over another peter—I will open the spring."

"Do as thou wilt," said Sir Henry; "it shall profit them but little."

Whether from real agitation, or from a desire to gain time, Phœbe was some minutes ere she could get the spring to open; it was, indeed, secured with art, and the machinery on which it acted was concealed in the frame of the portrait. The whole, when fastened, appeared quite motionless, and betrayed, as when examined by Colonel Everard, no external mark of its being possible to remove it. It was now withdrawn, however, and showed a narrow recess, with steps which ascended on one side into the thickness of the wall. Cromwell was now like a greyhound slipped from the leash with the prey in full view.—"Up," he cried, "Pearson, thou art swifter than I—Up thou next, corporal." With more agility than could have been expected from his person or years, which were past the meridian of life, and exclaiming,

"Before, those with the torches!" he followed the party, like an eager huntsman in the rear of his hounds, to encourage at once and direct them, as they penetrated into the labyrinth described by Doctor Rochecliffe in the "Wonders of Woodstock."

CHAPTER X.

> The King, therefore, for his defence
> Against the furious Queen,
> At Woodstock builded such a bower,
> As never yet was seen.
> Most curiously that bower was built,
> Of stone and timber strong;
> An hundered and fifty doors
> Did to this bower belong:
> And they so cunningly contrived,
> With turnings round about,
> That none but with a clew of thread
> Could enter in or out.
>
> *Ballad of Fair Rosamond.*

THE tradition of the country, as well as some historical evidence, confirmed the opinion that there existed, within the old Royal Lodge at Woodstock, a labyrinth, or connected series of subterranean passages, built chiefly by Henry II., for the security of his mistress, Rosamond Clifford, from the jealousy of his Queen, the celebrated Eleanor. Doctor Rochecliffe, indeed, in

one of those fits of contradiction with which antiquaries are sometimes seized, was bold enough to dispute the alleged purpose of the perplexed maze of rooms and passages with which the walls of the ancient palace were perforated; but the fact was undeniable, that in raising the fabric some Norman architect had exerted the utmost of the complicated art, which they have often shown elsewhere, in creating secret passages, and chambers of retreat and concealment. There were stairs, which were ascended merely, as it seemed, for the purpose of descending again—passages which, after turning and winding for a considerable way, returned to the place where they set out—there were trap-doors and hatchways, pannels and portcullises. Although Oliver was assisted by a sort of ground-plan, made out and transmitted by Joseph Tomkins, whose former employment in Doctor Rochecliffe's service had made him fully acquainted with the place, it was found imperfect; and, moreover, the most serious obstacles to their progress occurred in the shape of strong doors, party-walls, and iron-grates—so that the party blundered on in the dark, uncertain whe-

ther they were not going farther from, rather than approaching, the extremity of the labyrinth. They were obliged to send for mechanics, with sledge-hammers and other instruments, to force one or two of those doors, which resisted all other means of undoing them. Labouring along in these dusky passages, where, from time to time, they were like to be choked by the dust which their acts of violence excited, the soldiers were obliged to be relieved oftener than once, and the bulky Corporal Grace-be-here himself puffed and blew like a grampus that has got into shoal water. Cromwell alone continued, with unabated zeal, to push on his researches—to encourage the soldiers, by the exhortations which they best understood, against fainting for lack of faith—and to secure, by sentinels at proper places, possession of the ground which they had already explored. His acute and observing eye detected, with a sneering smile, the cordage and machinery by which the bed of poor Desborough had been inverted, and several remains of the various disguises, as well as private modes of access, by which Desborough, Bletson, and Harrison, had

been previously imposed upon. He pointed them out to Pearson, with no farther comment than was implied in the exclamation, "The simple fools!"

But his assistants began to lose heart and be discouraged, and required all his spirit to raise theirs. He then called their attention to voices which they seemed to hear before them, and urged these as evidence that they were moving on the track of some enemy of the Commonwealth, who, for the execution of his malignant plots, had retreated into these extraordinary fastnesses.

The spirits of the men became at last downcast, notwithstanding all this encouragement. They spoke to each other in whispers, of the devils of Woodstock, who might be all the while decoying them forward to a room said to exist in the Palace, where the floor, revolving on an axis, precipitated those who entered into a bottomless abyss. Humgudgeon hinted, that he had consulted the Scripture that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, "Eutychus fell down from the third loft." The energy and authority of Cromwell,

however, and the refreshment of some food and strong waters, reconciled them to pursuing their task.

Nevertheless, with all their unwearied exertions, morning dawned on the search before they had reached Doctor Rochecliffe's sitting apartment, into which, after all, they obtained entrance by a mode much more difficult than that which the doctor himself employed. But here their ingenuity was long at fault. From the miscellaneous articles that were strewed around, and the preparations made for food and lodging, it seemed they had gained the very citadel of the labyrinth; but though various passages opened from it, they all terminated in places with which they were already acquainted, or communicated with the other parts of the house, where their own sentinels assured them none had passed. Cromwell remained long in deep uncertainty. Meantime he directed Pearson to take charge of the ciphers, and more important papers which lay on the table. "Though there is little there," he said, "that I have not already known, by means of Trusty Tomkins—Honest Joseph—for

an artful and thorough-paced agent, the like of thee is not left in England."

After a considerable pause, during which he sounded with the pummel of his sword almost every stone in the building, and every plank on the floor, the General gave orders to bring the old knight and Doctor Rochecliffe to the spot, trusting that he might work out of them some explanation of the secrets of this apartment.

"So please your Excellency, to let me to deal with them," said Pearson, who was a thorough-paced soldier of fortune, and had been a buccaneer in the West Indies, "I think that, by a whip-cord twitched tight round their forehead, and twisted round with a pistol-but, I could make either the truth start from their lips, or the eyes from their head."

"Out upon thee, Pearson!" said Cromwell, with abhorrence; "we have no warrant for such cruelty, neither as Englishmen nor Christians. We may slay malignants as we crush noxious animals, but to torture them is a deadly sin; for it is written, 'He made them to be pitied of those who carried them captive.' Nay, I recall

the order even for their examination, trusting that wisdom will be granted us to discover their most secret devices."

There was a pause accordingly, during which an idea seized upon Cromwell's imagination—"Bring me hither," he said, "yonder stool;" and placing it beneath one of the windows, of which there were two so high in the wall as not to be accessible from the floor, he clambered up into the entrance of the window, which was six or seven feet deep, corresponding with the thickness of the wall. "Come up hither, Pearson," said the General; "but, ere thou comest, double the guard at the foot of the turret called Love's Ladder, and bid them bring up the other petard—So now, come thou hither."

The officer, however brave in the field, was one of those whom a great height strikes with giddiness and sickness. He shrunk back from the view of the precipice, on the verge of which Cromwell was standing with complete indifference, till the General, catching the hand of his follower, pulled him forward as far as he would advance. "I think," said the General, "I have

found the clew, but by this light it is no easy one! See you, we stand in the portal near the top of Rosamond's Tower; and yon turret, which rises opposite to our feet, is that which is called Love's Ladder, from which the draw-bridge reached that admitted the profligate Norman tyrant to the bower of his mistress."

"True, my lord, but the drawbridge is gone," said Pearson.

"Ay, Pearson," replied the General; "but an active man might spring from the spot we stand upon to the battlements of yonder turret."

"I do not think so, my lord," said Pearson.

"What!" said Cromwell; "not if the avenger of blood were behind you, with his slaughter-weapon in his hand?"

"The fear of death might do much," answered Pearson; "but when I look at that sheer depth on either side, and at the empty chasm between us and yonder turret, which is, I warrant you, twelve feet distant, I confess the truth, nothing short of the most imminent danger should induce me to try. Pah—the thought makes my head grow giddy!—I tremble to see your Highness stand

there, balancing yourself as if you meditated a spring into the empty air. I repeat, I would scarce stand so near the verge as does your Highness, for the rescue of my life."

"Ah, base and degenerate spirit!" said the General; "soul of mud and clay, wouldst thou not do it, and much more, for the possession of empire!—that is, peradventure," continued he, changing his tone as one who has said too much, "shouldst thou be called on to do this, that thereby becoming a great man in the tribes of Israel, thou mightest redeem the captivity of Jerusalem—ay, and it may be, work some great work for the afflicted people of this land."

"Your Highness may feel such calls," said the officer; "but it is not for poor Gilbert Pearson, your faithful follower. You made a jest of me yesterday when I tried to speak your language; and I am no more able to fulfil your designs, than to use your mode of speech."

"But, Pearson," said Cromwell, "thou hast thrice, yea four times, called me your Highness."

"Did I, my lord? I was not sensible of it. I crave your pardon," said the officer.

"Nay," said Oliver, "there was no offence. I do indeed stand high, and I may perchance stand higher—though, alas, it were fitter for a simple soul like me to return to my plough and my husbandry. Nevertheless, I will not wrestle against the Supreme will, should I be called on to do yet more in that worthy cause. For surely he who hath been to our British Israel as a shield of help, and a sword of excellency, making her enemies be found lyers unto her, will not give over the flock to those foolish shepherds of Westminster, who shear the sheep and feed them not, and who are in very deed hirelings, not shepherds."

"I trust to see your lordship quoit them all down stairs," answered Pearson. "But may I ask why we pursue this discourse even now, until we have secured the common enemy?"

"I will tarry no jot of time—" said the General; "fence the communication of Love's Ladder, as it is called, below, as I take it for almost certain, that the party whom we have driven from fastness to fastness during the night, has at length sprung to the top of yonder battlements from the

place where we now stand. Finding the turret is guarded below, the place he has chosen for his security will prove a rat-trap, from whence there is no returning."

"There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet," said Pearson; "were it not better, my lord, to mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret with its contents one hundred feet into the air?"

"Ah, silly man," said Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder; "if thou hadst done this without telling me, it had been good service. But we will first summon the turret, and then think whether the petard will serve our turn—it is but mining at last.—Blow a summons there, down below."

The trumpets rung at his bidding, till the old walls echoed from every recess and vaulted archway. Cromwell, as if he cared not to look upon the person whom he expected to appear, drew back, like a necromancer afraid of the spectre which he has evoked.

"He has come to the battlement," said Pearson to his General.

"In what dress or appearance?" answered Cromwell from within the chamber.

"A grey riding-suit, passmented with silver, russet walking-boots, a cut band, a grey hat and plume, black hair."

"It is he, it is he," said Cromwell; "and another crowning mercy is vouchsafed!"

Meantime, Pearson and young Lee exchanged defiance from their respective posts.

"Surrender," said the former, "or we blow you up in your fastness."

"I am come of too high a race to surrender to rebels," said Albert, assuming the air with which, in such a condition, a king might have spoken.

"I bear you to witness," cried Cromwell, exultingly, "he hath refused quarter. Of a surety, his blood be on his head.—One of you bring down the barrel of powder. As he loves to soar high, we will add what can be taken from the soldiers' bandeliers.—Come with me, Pearson; thou understandest this gear.—Corporal Grace-be-here, stand thou fast on the platform of the window, where Captain Pearson and I stood but even now, and bend the point of thy partizan against any who

shall attempt to pass. Thou art as strong as a bull; and I will back thee against despair itself."

"But," said the corporal, mounting reluctantly, "the place is as the pinnacle of the Temple; and it is written, that Eutychus fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

"Because he slept upon his post," answered Cromwell readily. "Beware thou of carelessness, and thus thy feet shall be kept from stumbling.—You four soldiers, remain here to support the corporal, if it be necessary; and you, as well as the corporal, will draw into the vaulted passage the minute the trumpets sound a retreat. It is as strong as a casemate, and you may lie there safe from the effects of the mine. Thou, Zerobabel Robins, I know wilt be their lance-prisade."

Robins bowed, and the General departed to join those who were without.

As he reached the door of the hall, the petard was heard to explode, and he saw that it had succeeded; for the soldiers rushed, brandishing their swords and pistols, in at the postern of the turret, whose gate had been successfully forced. A thrill

of exultation, but not unmingled with horror, shot across the veins of the ambitious soldier.

"Now—now!" he cried; "they are dealing with him!"

His expectations were deceived. Pearson and the others returned disappointed, and reported they had been stopt by a strong trap-door of grated iron, extended over the narrow stair; and they could see there was an obstacle of the same kind some ten feet higher. To remove it by force, while a desperate and well-armed man had the advantage of the steps above them, might cost many lives. "Which, lack-a-day," said the General, "it is our duty to be tender of. What dost thou advise, Gilbert Pearson?"

"We must use powder, my lord," answered Pearson, who saw his master was determined he should have the whole merit of the proceeding—"There may be a chamber easily and conveniently formed under the foot of the stair. We have a sausage, by good luck, to form the train—and so——"

"Ah!" said Cromwell, "I know thou canst manage such gear well—But, Gilbert, I go to

visit the posts, and give them orders to retire to a safe distance when the retreat is sounded. You will allow them five minutes for this purpose."

"Three is enough for any knave of them all," said Pearson. "They will be lame indeed, that require more on such a service—I ask but one, though I fire the train myself."

"Take heed," said Cromwell, "that the poor soul be listened to, if he asks quarter. It may be, he may repent him of his hard-heartedness, and call for mercy."

"And mercy he shall have—" answered Pearson, "providing he calls loud enough to make me hear him; for the explosion of that damned petard has made me as deaf as the devil's dam."

"Hush, Gilbert, hush!" said Cromwell; "you offend in your language."

"Zooks, sir, I must speak either in your way, or in my own," said Pearson, "unless I am to be dumb as well as deaf?—Away with you, my lord, to visit the posts; and you will presently hear me make some noise in the world."

Cromwell smiled gently at his aid-de-camp's petulance, patted him on the shoulder, and called

him a mad fellow, walked a little way, then turned back to whisper, "What thou doest, do quickly;" then returned again towards the outer circle of guards, turning his head from time to time, as if to assure himself that the corporal, to whom he had intrusted the duty, still kept guard with his advanced weapon upon the terrific chasm between Rosamond's Tower and the corresponding turret. Seeing him standing on his post, the General muttered between his mustachios, "The fellow hath the strength and courage of a bear; and yonder is a post where one shall do more to keep back than an hundred in making way." He cast a last look on the gigantic figure who stood in that airy position, like some Gothic statue, the weapon half levelled against the opposite turret, with the but rested against his right foot, his steel cap and burnished corslet glittering in the rising sun.

Cromwell then passed on to give the necessary orders, that such sentinels as might be endangered at their present posts by the effect of the mine, should withdraw at the sound of the trumpet to the places which he pointed out to them. Never, on any occasion of his life, did he display more calmness and presence of mind. He was kind, nay,

facetious with the soldiers, who adored him; and yet he resembled a volcano before the eruption commences—all peaceful and quiet without, while an hundred contradictory passions were raging in his bosom.

Corporal Humgudgeon meanwhile remained steady upon his post; yet, though as determined a soldier as ever fought among the redoubted regiment of Ironsides, and possessed of no small share of that exalted fanaticism which lent so keen an edge to the natural courage of those stern religionists, the veteran felt his present situation to be highly uncomfortable. Within a pike's length of him arose a turret, which was about to be dispersed in massive fragments through the air; and he felt small confidence in the length of time which might be allowed for his escape from such a dangerous vicinity. The duty of constant vigilance upon his post, was partly divided by this natural feeling, which induced him from time to time to bend his eyes on the miners below, instead of keeping them rivetted on the opposite turret.

At length the interest of the scene arose to the uttermost. After entering and returning from the turret, and coming out again more than once in

the course of about twenty minutes, Pearson issued, as it might be supposed, for the last time, carrying in his hand, and uncoiling as he went along, the sausage, or linen bag, (so called from its appearance,) which, strongly sewed together, and crammed with gunpowder, was to serve as a train betwixt the mine to be sprung, and the point occupied by the engineer who was to give fire. He was in the act of finally adjusting it, when the attention of the corporal on the tower became irresistibly and exclusively rivetted upon the preparations for the explosion. But while he watched the aid-de-camp drawing his pistol to give fire, and the trumpeter handling his instrument, as waiting the order to sound the retreat, fate rushed on the unhappy sentinel in a way he least expected.

Young, active, bold, and completely possessed of his presence of mind, Albert Lee, who had been from the loop-holes a watchful observer of every measure which had been taken by his besiegers, had resolved to make one desperate effort for self-preservation. While the head of the sentinel on the opposite platform was turned from

him, and bent rather downwards, he suddenly sprung across the chasm, though the space on which he lighted was scarce wide enough for two persons, threw the surprised soldier from his precarious stand, and jumped himself down into the chamber. The gigantic trooper went sheer down twenty feet, struck against a projecting battlement, which launched the wretched man outwards, and then fell on the earth with such tremendous force, that the head, which first touched the ground, dinted a hole in the soil of six inches in depth, and was crushed like an egg-shell. Scarce knowing what had happened, yet startled and confounded at the descent of this heavy body, which fell at no great distance from him, Pearson snapt his pistol at the train, no previous warning given; the powder caught, and the mine exploded. Had it been strongly charged with powder, many of those without might have suffered; but the explosion was only powerful enough to blow out, in a lateral direction, a part of the wall just above the foundation, sufficient, however, to destroy the equipoise of the building. Then amid a cloud of smoke, which began gradually to encircle the

turret like a shrowd, arising slowly from its base to its summit, it was seen to stagger and shake, by all who had courage to look steadily at a sight so dreadful. Slowly, at first, the building inclined outwards, then rushed precipitately to its base, and fell to the ground in huge fragments, the strength of its resistance showing the excellence of the mason-work. The engineer, so soon as he had fired the train, fled in such alarm, that he well nigh ran against his General, who was advancing towards him, while a huge stone from the summit of the building, flying farther than the rest, lighted within a yard of them.

" Thou hast been overhasty, Pearson," said Cromwell, with the greatest composure possible —" hath no one fallen in that same tower of Siloe?"

" Some one fell," said Pearson, still in great agitation, " and yonder lies his body half-buried in the rubbish."

With a quick and resolute step Cromwell approached the spot, and exclaimed, " Pearson, thou hast ruined me—the young man hath escaped.—This is our own sentinel—plague on the

idiot! Let him rot beneath the ruins which crushed him!"

A cry now resounded from the platform of Rosamond's Tower, which appeared yet taller than formerly, deprived of the neighbouring turret, which emulated, though it did not attain to its height,—" A prisoner, noble General—a prisoner —the fox whom we have chased all night is now in the snare—the Lord hath delivered him into the hand of his servants."

" Look you keep him in safe custody," exclaimed Cromwell, " and bring him presently down to the apartment from which the secret passages have their principal entrance."

" Your Excellency shall be obeyed."—

The proceedings of Albert Lee, to which these exclamations related, had been unfortunate. He had dashed from the platform, as we have related, the gigantic strength of the soldier opposed to him, and had instantly jumped down into Rochecliffe's chamber. But the soldiers stationed there threw themselves upon him, and, after a struggle, which was hopelessly maintained against such advantage of numbers, had thrown the young

cavalier to the ground, two of them, drawn down by his strenuous exertions, falling across him. At the same moment a sharp and severe report was heard, which, like a clap of thunder in the immediate vicinity, shook all around them, till the strong and solid tower tottered like the mast of a stately vessel when about to part by the board. In a few seconds this was followed by another sullen sound, at first low and deep, but augmenting like the roar of a cataract, as it descends, reeling, bellowing, and rushing, as if to astound both heaven and earth. So awful, indeed, was the sound of the neighbour tower as it fell, that both the captive, and those who struggled with him, continued for a minute or two passive in each other's grasp.

Albert was the first who recovered consciousness and activity. He shook off those who lay above him, and made a desperate effort to gain his feet, in which he partly succeeded. But as he had to deal with men accustomed to every species of danger, and whose energies were recovered nearly as soon as his own, he was completely se-

cured, and his arms held down. Loyal and faithful to his trust, and resolved to sustain to the last the character which he had assumed, he exclaimed, as his struggles were finally overpowered, "Rebel villains! would you slay your king?"

"Ha, heard you that!" cried one of the soldiers to the lance-prisade,* who commanded the party. "Shall I not strike this son of a wicked father under the fifth rib, even as the tyrant of Moab was smitten by Ehud with a dagger of a cubit's length?"

But Robins answered, "Be it far from us, Merciful Strickalthrow, to slay in cold blood the captive of our bow and of our spear. Methinks, since the storm of Tredagh † we have shed enough of blood—therefore, on your lives do him no evil; but take from him his arms, and let us bring him before the chosen Instrument, even our General, that he may do with him what is meet in his eyes."

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* "Lance-prisade," or "lance-brisade," a private appointed to a small command—a sort of temporary corporal.

† Tredagh, or Drogheda, was taken by Cromwell in 1649, by storm, and the governor and whole garrison put to the sword.

By this time the soldier, whose exultation had made him the first to communicate the intelligence from the battlements to Cromwell, returned, and brought commands corresponding to the orders of their temporary officer; and Albert Lee, disarmed and bound, was conducted as a captive into the apartment which derived its name from the victories of his ancestor, and placed in the presence of General Cromwell.

Running over in his mind the time which had elapsed since the departure of Charles, till the siege, if it may be termed so, had terminated in his own capture, Albert had every reason to hope that his Royal Master must have had time to accomplish his escape. Yet he determined to maintain to the last a deceit, which might for a time insure the King's safety. The difference betwixt them could not, he thought, be instantly discovered, begrimed as he was with dust and smoke, and with blood issuing from some scratches received in the scuffle.

In this evil plight, but bearing himself with such dignity as was adapted to the princely cha-

racter, Albert was ushered into the apartment of Victor Lee, where, in his father's own chair, reclined the triumphant enemy of the cause to which the house of Lee had been hereditarily faithful.

CHAPTER XI.

A barren title hast thou bought too dear;
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a King?
Henry IV. Part I.

Oliver Cromwell arose from his seat as the two veteran soldiers, Zerobabel Robins and Merciful Strickalthrow, introduced into the apartment the prisoner, whom they held by the arms, and fixed his stern hazel eye on Albert long before he could give vent to the ideas which were swelling in his bosom. Exultation was the most predominant.

"Art not thou," he at length said, "that Egyptian, which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness many thousand men, who were murderers?—Ha, youth! I

have hunted thee from Stirling to Worcester, and we are met at last!"

"I would," replied Albert, speaking in the character which he had assumed, "that we had met where I could have shown thee the difference betwixt a rightful King and an ambitious Usurper!"

"Go to, young man," said Cromwell; "say rather the difference between a Judge raised up for the redemption of England, and the son of those Kings whom the Lord in his anger permitted to reign over her. But we will not waste useless words. God knows that it is not of our will that we are called to such high matters, being as humble in our thoughts as we are of ourselves; and in our unassisted nature frail and foolish, and unable to render a reason but for the better spirit within us, which is not of us.—Thou art weary, young man, and thy nature requires rest and refection, being doubtless dealt with delicately, as one who hath fed on the fat, and drunk of the sweet, and who hath been clothed in purple and fine linen."

Here the General suddenly stopt, and then abruptly exclaimed—"But is this—Ah! whom

have we here? These are not the looks of the swarthy lad Charles Stuart?—A cheat! a cheat!"

Albert hastily cast his eyes on a mirror which stood in the room, and perceived that a dark peruke, found among Doctor Rochecliffe's miscellaneous wardrobe, had been disordered in the scuffle, and that his own light-brown hair was escaping from beneath it.

"Who is this?" said Cromwell, again stamping with fury—"Pluck the disguise from him."

The soldiers did so; and bringing him at the same time towards the light, the deception could not be maintained for a moment longer, with any possibility of success. Cromwell came up to him with his teeth set, and grinding against each other as he spoke, his hands clenched, and trembling with emotion, and speaking with a voice low-pitched, bitterly and deeply emphatic, such as might have preceded a stab with his dagger.

"Thy name, young man?"

He was answered calmly and firmly, while the countenance of the speaker wore a cast of triumph, and even contempt.

"Albert Lee of Ditchley, a faithful subject of King Charles."

"I might have guessed it," said Cromwell.—"Ay, and to King Charles shalt thou go, as soon as it is noon on the dial.—Pearson," he continued, "let him be carried to the others; and let them be executed at twelve exactly."

"All, sir?" said Pearson, surprised; for Cromwell, though he at times made formidable examples, was, in general, by no means sanguinary.

"*All*—" repeated Cromwell, fixing his eye on young Lee.—"Yes, young sir, your conduct has devoted to death thy father, thy kinsman, and the stranger that was in thine household. Such wreck hast thou brought on thy father's house."

"My father too—my aged father!" said Albert, looking upward, and endeavouring to raise his hands in the same direction, which was prevented by his bonds. "The Lord's will be done!"

"All this havoc can be saved, if," said the General, "thou wilt answer one question—Where is the young Charles Stuart, who was called King of Scotland?"

"Under Heaven's protection, and safe from thy power," was the firm and unhesitating answer of the young royalist.

"Away with him to prison," said Cromwell; "and from thence to execution with the rest of them, as malignants taken in the fact. Let a court martial sit on them presently."

"One word," said young Lee, as they led him from the room.

"Stop, stop," said Cromwell, with the agitation of renewed hope—"let him be heard."

"You love texts of scripture," said Albert—"Let this be the subject of your next homily—'Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?'"

"Away with him," said the General; "let him die the death.—I have said it."

As Cromwell spoke these words, his aid-de-camp observed that he became unwontedly pale.

"Your Excellency is over-toiled in the public service," said Pearson; "a course of the stag in the evening will refresh you. The old knight hath a noble hound here, if we can but get him to hunt without his master, which may be hard, as he is faithful, and——"

"Hang him up!" said Cromwell.

"What—whom—hang the noble dog? Your Excellency was wont to love a good hound?"

"It matters not," said Cromwell; "let him be killed. Is it not written, that they slew in the valley of Achor, not only the accursed Achan, with his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and every live thing belonging unto him? And even thus shall we do to the malignant family of Lee, who have aided Sisera in his flight, when Israel might have been delivered of his trouble for ever. But send out couriers and patrols—Follow, pursue, watch in every direction—Let my horse be ready at the door in five minutes, or bring me the first thou canst find."

It seemed to Pearson that this was something wildly spoken, and that the cold perspiration was standing upon the General's brow as he said it. He therefore again pressed the necessity of repose, and it would appear that nature seconded strongly the representation. Cromwell arose, and made a step or two towards the door of the apartment; but stopped, staggered, and, after a pause, sate

down in a chair. "Truly, friend Pearson," he said, "this weary carcase of ours is an impediment to us, even in our most necessary business, and I am fitter to sleep than to watch, which is not my wont. Place guards, therefore, till we repose ourselves for an hour or two. Send out in every direction, and spare not for horses' flesh. Wake me if the court martial should require instruction, and forget not to see the sentence punctually executed on the Lees, and those who were arrested with them."

As Cromwell spoke thus, he arose and half-opened a bed-room door, when Pearson again craved pardon for asking if he had rightly understood his Excellency, that all the prisoners were to be executed.

"Have I not said it?" answered Cromwell, displeasedly. "Is it because thou art a man of blood, and hast ever been, that thou dost affect these scruples to show thyself tender-hearted at my expense? I tell thee, that if there lack one in the full tale of execution, thine own life shall pay the forfeit."

So saying, he entered the apartment, followed

by the groom of his chamber, who attended upon Pearson's summons.

When his General had retired, Pearson remained in great perplexity what he ought to do; and that from no scruples of conscience, but from uncertainty whether he might not err either in postponing, or in too hastily and too literally executing, the instructions he had received.

In the meantime, Strickalthrow and Robins had returned, after lodging Albert in prison, to the room where Pearson was still musing on his General's commands. Both these men were adjutators in their army, and old soldiers, whom Cromwell was accustomed to treat with great familiarity; so that Robins had no hesitation to ask Captain Pearson, "Whether he meant to execute the commands of the General, even to the letter?"

Pearson shook his head with an air of doubt, but added, "there was no choice left."

"Be assured," said the old man, "that if thou doest this folly, thou wilt cause Israel to sin, and that the General will not be pleased with your service. Thou knowest, and none better than thou, that Oliver, although he be like unto David the son

of Jesse, in faith, and wisdom, and courage, yet there are times when the evil spirit cometh upon him as it did upon Saul, and he uttereth commands which he will not thank any one for executing."

Pearson was too good a politician to assent directly to a proposition which he could not deny—he only shook his head once more, and said that it was easy for those to talk who were not responsible, but the soldier's duty was to obey his orders, and not to judge of them.

"Very righteous truth," said Merciful Strickalthrow, a grim old Scotchman; "I marvel where our brother Zerobabel caught up this softness of heart?"

"Why, I do but wish," said Zerobabel, "that four or five human creatures may draw the breath of God's air for a few hours more; there can be small harm done by delaying the execution,—and the General will have some time for reflection."

"Ay," said Captain Pearson, "but I in my service must be more pointedly obsequious, than thou in thy plainness art bound to be, friend Zerobabel."

"Then shall the coarse frieze-cassock of the private soldier bear out the blast with the gilded lining of the captain," said Zerobabel. "Ay, indeed, I can show you warrant why we be aidful to each other in doing acts of kindness and long-suffering, seeing the best of us are poor sinful creatures, who might suffer, being called to a brief accounting."

"Of a verity you surprise me, brother Zerobabel," said Strickalthrow; "that thou, being an old and experienced soldier, whose head hath grown grey in battle, should'st give such advice to a young officer. Is not the General's commission to take away the wicked from the land, and to root out the Amalekite, and the Jebusite, and the Perusite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite? and are not these men justly to be compared to the five kings, who took shelter in the cave of Makedah, who were delivered into the hands of Joshua the son of Nun? and he caused his captains and his soldiers to come near and tread on their necks—and then he smote them, and he slew them, and then he hanged them on

five trees, even till evening—And thou, Gilbert Pearson by name, be not withheld from the duty which is appointed to thee, but do even as has been commanded by him who is raised up to judge and to deliver Israel; for it is written, 'cursed is he who holdeth back his sword from the slaughter.'"

Thus wrangled the two military theologians, while Pearson, much more solicitous to anticipate the wishes of Oliver than to know the will of Heaven, listened to them with great indecision and perplexity.

CHAPTER XII.

But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
Put the soul's armour on, alike prepared
For all a soldier's warfare brings.
JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE reader will recollect, that when Rochecliffe and Joceline were made prisoners, the party which escorted them had two other captives in their train, Colonel Everard, namely, and the Rev. Nehemiah Holdenough. When they had obtained entrance into Woodstock, and commenced their search after the fugitive Prince, the prisoners were placed in what had been an old guard-room, and which was by its strength well calculated to serve for a prison, and a guard was placed over them by Pearson. No light was allowed, save that of a

glimmering fire of charcoal. The prisoners remained separated from each other, Colonel Everard conversing with Nehemiah Holdenough, at a distance from Doctor Rochecliffe, Sir Henry Lee, and Joceline. The party was soon after augmented by Wildrake, who was brought down to the Lodge, and thrust in with so little ceremony, that, his arms being bound, he had very nearly fallen on his nose in the middle of the prison.

"I thank you, my good friend," he said looking back to the door, which they who had pushed him in were securing—" *Point de ceremonie*—no apology for tumbling, so we light in good company.—Save ye, save ye, gentlemen all—What, *a la mort*, and nothing stirring to keep the spirits up, and make a night on't?—the last we shall have, I take it; for a make* to a million, but we trine to the nubbing cheat† to-morrow.—Patron—noble patron, how goes it? This was but a scurvy trick of Nol, so far as you were concerned; as for me,

* A half-penny. † Hang on the gallows.

why I might have deserved something of the kind at his hand."

"Prithee, Wildrake, sit down," said Everard, "thou art drunk—disturb us not."

"Drunk? I drunk?" cried Wildrake, "I have been splicing the main-brace, as Jack says at Wapping—have been tasting Nol's brandy in a bumper to the King's health, and another to his Excellency's confusion, and another to the d——n of the Parliament—and it may be one or two more, but all to devilish good toasts. But I'm not drunk."

"Prithee, friend, be not profane," said Nehemiah Holdenough.

"What, my little Presbyterian Parson, my slender Mass John? thou shalt say amen to this world instantly—" said Wildrake; "I have had a weary time in't for one.—Ha, noble Sir Henry, I kiss your hand—I tell thee, knight, the point of my toledo was near Cromwell's heart last night, as ever a button on the breast of his doublet. Rat him, he wears secret armour—He a soldier! Had it not been for a cursed steel shirt, I would have spitted him like a lark.—Ha, Doctor Rochecliffe?—thou knowest I can wield my weapon."

"Yes," replied the doctor, "and you know I can use mine."

"I prithee be quiet, Master Wildrake," said Sir Henry.

"Nay, good knight," answered Wildrake, "be somewhat more cordial with a comrade in distress. This is a different scene from the Brentford storming party. The jade Fortune has been a very step-mother to me. I will sing you a song I made on my own ill luck."

"At this moment, Captain Wildrake, we are not in a fitting mood for singing," said Sir Henry, civilly and gravely.

"Nay, it will aid your devotions—Egad, it sounds like a penitential psalm.

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad,
If e'er I do well 'tis a wonder.
I spent all my means
Amid sharpers and queans,
Then I got a commission to plunder.

I have stockings 'tis true,
But the devil a shoe,
I am forced to wear boots in all weather,
Be d——d the boot sole,
Curse on the spur-roll,
Confounded be the upper-leather."

The door opened as Wildrake finished this stanza at the top of his voice, and in rushed a sentinel, who, greeting him by the title of "blasphemous bellowing bull of Bashan," bestowed a severe blow, with his ramrod, on the shoulders of the songster, whose bonds permitted him no means of returning the compliment.

"Your humble servant again, sir," said Wildrake, shrugging his shoulders, "sorry I have no means of showing my gratitude. I am bound over to keep the peace like Captain Bobadil—Ha, knight, did you hear my bones clatter? that blow came twangingly off—the fellow might inflict the bastinado, were it in presence of the Grand Seignior—he has no taste for music, knight—is no way moved by the 'concord of sweet sounds,' I will warrant him fit for treason, stratagem, and spoil—Eh?—all down in the mouth—well—I'll go to sleep to-night on a bench, as I've done many a night, and I will be ready to be hanged decently in the morning, which never happened to me before in all my life—

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad—

Psha! This is not the tune it goes to." Here he fell fast asleep, and sooner or later all his companions in misfortune followed his example.

The benches intended for the repose of the soldiers of the guard, afforded the prisoners convenience enough to lie down, though their slumbers, it may be believed, were neither sound nor undisturbed. But when daylight was but a little while broken, the explosion of gunpowder which took place, and the subsequent fall of the turret to which the mine was applied, would have awakened the Seven Sleepers, or Morpheus himself. The smoke, penetrating through the windows, left them at no loss for the cause of the din.

"There went my gunpowder," said Rochecliffe, "which has, I trust, blown up as many rebel villains as it might have been the means of destroying otherwise in a fair field. It must have caught fire by chance."

"By chance? no," said Sir Henry; "depend on it, my bold Albert has fired the train, and that in yonder blast Cromwell was flying towards the heaven whose battlements he will never reach—Ah

my brave boy! and perhaps thou art thyself sacrificed, like a youthful Sampson among the rebellious Philistines.—But I will not be long behind thee, Albert."

Everard hastened to the door, hoping to obtain from the guard, to whom his name and rank might be known, some explanation of the noise, which seemed to announce some dreadful catastrophe.

But Nehemiah Holdenough, whose rest had been broken by the trumpet which gave signal for the explosion, appeared in the very acme of horror—"It is the trumpet of the Archangel!" he cried,—"it is the crushing of this world of elements—it is the summons to the Judgment-seat! The dead are obeying the call—they are with us—they are amongst us—they arise in their bodily frames—they come to summon us!"

As he spoke, his eyes were rivetted upon Dr Rochecliffe, who stood directly opposite to him. In rising hastily, the cap which he commonly wore, according to a custom then usual both among clergymen and gownmen of a civil profession, had escaped from his head, and carried with it the large silk patch which he probably wore for the

purpose of disguise; for the cheek which was disclosed was unscarred, and the eye as good as that which was usually covered.

Colonel Everard returning from the door, endeavoured in vain to make Master Holdenough comprehend what he learned from the guard without, that the explosion had only involved the death of one of Cromwell's soldiers. The Presbyterian divine continued to stare wildly at him of the Episcopal persuasion.

But Dr Rochecliffe heard and understood the news brought by Colonel Everard, and, relieved from the instant anxiety which had kept him stationary, he advanced towards the retiring Calvinist, extending his hand in the most friendly manner.

"Avoid thee—Avoid thee!" said Holdenough, "the living may not join hands with the dead."

'But I," said Rochecliffe, "am as much alive as you are."

"Thou alive!—thou! Joseph Albany, whom my own eyes saw precipitated from the battlements of Clidesthrow Castle?"

"Ay," answered the doctor, "but you did not see me swim ashore on a marsh covered with sedges—*fugit ad salices*—after a manner which I will explain to you another time."

Holdenough touched his hand with doubt and uncertainty. "Thou art indeed warm and alive," he said, "and yet after so many blows, and a fall so tremendous—thou canst not be *my* Joseph Albany."

"I am Joseph Albany Rochecliffe," said the doctor, "become so in virtue of my mother's little estate, which fines and confiscations have made an end of."

"And is it so indeed!" said Holdenough, "and have I recovered mine old chum!"

"Even so," replied Rochecliffe, "by the same token I appeared to you in the Mirror Chamber —Thou wert so bold, Nehemiah, that our whole scheme would have been shipwrecked, had I not appeared to thee in the shape of a departed friend. Yet, believe me, it went against my heart to do it."

"Ah, fie on thee, fie on thee," said Holdenough, throwing himself into his arms and clasping him to his bosom, "thou wert ever a naughty

wag. How could'st thou play me such a trick ?—Ah, Albany, doest thou remember Dr Purefoy and Caius College ?"

" Marry, do I," said the doctor, thrusting his arm through the presbyterian divine's, and guiding him to a seat apart from the other prisoners, who witnessed this scene with much surprise. " Remember Caius College ?" said Rochecliffe, " ay, and the good ale we drank, and our parties to mother Huff-cap's."

" Vanity of vanities," said Holdenough, smiling kindly at the same time, and still holding his recovered friend's arm enclosed and hand-locked in his.

" But the breaking the Principal's orchard, so cleanly done," said the doctor ; " it was the first plot I ever framed, and much work I had to prevail on thee to go into it."

" Oh, name not that iniquity," said Nehemiah, " since I may well say, as the pious Master Baxter, that these boyish offences have had their punishment in later years, inasmuch as that inordinate appetite for fruit hath produced stomachic affections under which I yet labour."

"True, true, dear Nehemiah," said Rochecliffe, "but care not for them—a dram of brandy will correct it all. Mr Baxter was"—he was about to say "an ass," but checked himself, and only filled up the sentence with "a good man, I dare say, but over scrupulous."

So they sat down together the best of friends, and for half an hour talked with mutual delight over old college stories. By degrees they got on the politics of the day; and though then they unclasped their hands, and there occurred between them such expressions as, "Nay, my dear brother," and, "there I must needs differ," and, "on this point I crave leave to think;" yet a hue and cry against the Independents and other sectarists being started, they followed like brethren in full hollo, and it was hard to guess which was most forward. Unhappily, in the course of this amiable intercourse, something was mentioned about the bishopric of Titus, which at once involved them in the doctrinal question of Church Government. Then, alas! the flood-gates were opened, and they showered on each other Greek and Hebrew texts, while their eyes kindled, their

cheeks glowed, their hands became clenched, and they looked more like fierce polemics about to rend each other's eyes out, than Christian divines.

Roger Wildrake, by making himself an auditor of the debate, contrived to augment its violence. He took, of course, a most decided part in a question, the merits of which were totally unknown to him. Somewhat overawed by Holdenough's ready oratory and learning, the cavalier watched with a face of anxiety the countenance of Dr Rochecliffe; but when he saw the proud eye and steady bearing of the Episcopal champion, and heard him answer Greek with Greek, and Hebrew with Hebrew, he backed his arguments as he closed them with a stout rap upon the bench, and an exulting laugh in the face of the antagonist. It was with some difficulty that Sir Henry and Colonel Everard, having at length and reluctantly interfered, prevailed on the two alienated friends to adjourn their dispute, removing at the same time to a distance, and regarding each other with looks, in which old friendship appeared to have totally given way to mutual animosity.

But while they sate lowering on each other,

and longing to renew a contest in which each claimed the victory, Pearson entered the prison, and in a low and troubled voice, desired the persons whom it contained to prepare for instant death.

Sir Henry Lee received the doom with the stern composure which he had hitherto displayed. Colonel Everard attempted the interposition of a strong and resentful appeal to the Parliament, against the judgment of the Court Martial and the General. But Pearson declined to receive or transmit any such remonstrance, and with a dejected look and mien of melancholy presage, renewed his exhortation to them to prepare for the hour of noon, and withdrew from the prison.

The operation of this intelligence on the two clerical disputants was more remarkable. They gazed for a moment on each other with eyes in which repentant kindness and a feeling of generous shame quenched every lingering feeling of resentment, and joining in the mutual exclamation—"My brother—my brother, I have sinned, I have sinned in offending thee!" they rushed into each

other's arms, shed tears as they demanded each other's forgiveness, and like two warriors, who sacrifice a personal quarrel to discharge their duty against the common enemy, they recalled nobler ideas of their sacred character, and assuming the part which best became them on an occasion so melancholy, began to exhort those around them to meet the doom that had been announced, with the firmness and dignity which Christianity alone can give.

CHAPTER XIII.

Most gracious prince, good Cannyng cried,
  Leave vengeance to our God,
And lay the iron rule aside,
  Be thine the olive rod.
Ballad of Sir Charles Bawdin.

The hour appointed for execution had been long past, and it was about five in the evening when the Protector summoned Pearson to his presence. He went with fear and reluctance, uncertain how he might be received. After remaining about a quarter of an hour, the aid-de-camp returned to Victor Lee's parlour, where he found the old soldier, Zerobabel Robins, in attendance for his return.

"How is Oliver?" said the old man, anxiously.

"Why, well," answered Pearson, "and hath

asked no questions of the execution, but many concerning the reports we have been able to make regarding the flight of the young man, and is much moved at thinking he must now be beyond pursuit. Also I gave him certain papers belonging to the malignant Doctor Rochecliffe."

"Then will I venture upon him," said the adjutator; "so give me a napkin that I may look like a sewer, and fetch up the food which I directed should be in readiness."

Two troopers attended accordingly with a ration of beef, such as was distributed to the private soldiers, and dressed after their fashion—a pewter pot of ale, a trencher with salt, black pepper, and a loaf of ammunition bread. "Come with me," he said to Pearson, "and fear not—Nol loves an innocent jest." He boldly entered the General's sleeping apartment, and said aloud, "Arise, thou that art called to be a Judge in Israel—let there be no more folding of the hands to sleep. Lo, I come as a sign to thee; wherefore arise, eat, drink, and let thy heart be glad within thee, for thou shalt eat with joy the food of him that laboureth in the trenches, seeing that since thou wert com-

mander over the host, the poor sentinel hath had such provisions as I have now placed for thine own refreshment."

"Truly, brother Zerobabel," said Cromwell, accustomed to such starts of enthusiasm among his followers, "we would wish that it were so; neither is it our desire to sleep soft, nor feed more highly than the meanest that ranks under our banners. Verily thou hast chosen well for my refreshment, and the smell of the food is savoury in my nostrils."

He arose from the bed, on which he had lain down half dressed, and wrapping his cloak around him, sate down by the bedside, and partook heartily of the plain food which was prepared for him. While he was eating, Cromwell commanded Pearson to finish his report—"You need not desist for the presence of a worthy soldier, whose spirit is as my spirit."

"Nay, but," interrupted Robins, "you are to know that Gilbert Pearson hath not fully executed thy commands, touching a part of those malignants, all of whom should have died at noon."

"What execution—what malignants?" said Cromwell, laying down his knife and fork.

"Those in the prison here at Woodstock," answered Zerobabel, "whom your Excellency commanded should be executed at noon, as taken in the fact of rebellion against the Commonwealth."

"Wretch!" said Cromwell, starting up, and addressing Pearson, "thou hast not touched Mark Everard, in whom there was no guilt, for he was deceived by him who passed between us—neither hast thou put forth thy hand on the pragmatic Presbyterian minister, to have all those of the classes cry sacrilege, and alienate them from us for ever?"

"If your Excellency wish them to live, they live—their life and death are in the power of a word," said Pearson.

"Enfranchise them; I must gain the Presbyterian interest over to us if I can."

"Rochecliffe, the arch-plotter," said Pearson, "I thought to have executed, but——"

"Barbarous man," said Cromwell, "alike ungrateful and impolitic—wouldst thou have destroyed our decoy-duck? This doctor is but like

a well, a shallow one indeed, but something deeper than the springs which discharge their secret tribute into his keeping; then come I with a pump, and suck it all up to the open air. Enlarge him, and let him have money if he wants it. I know his haunts; he can go nowhere but our eye will be upon him.—But you look at each other darkly, as if you had more to say than you durst. I trust you have not done to death Sir Henry Lee?"

"No. Yet the man," replied Pearson, "is a confirmed malignant, and——"

"Ay, but he is also a noble relic of the ancient English Gentleman," said the General. "I would I knew how to win the favour of that race. But we, Pearson, whose royal robes are the armour which we wear on our bodies, and whose leading-staves are our sceptres, are too newly set up to draw the respect of the proud malignants, who cannot brook to submit to less than royal lineage. Yet what can they see in the longest kingly line in Europe, save that it runs back to a successful soldier? I grudge that one man should be honoured and followed, because he is the descendant of a victorious commander, while less honour

and allegiance is paid to another, who, in personal qualities, and in success, might emulate the founder of his rival's dynasty. Well, Sir Henry Lee lives, and shall live for me. His son, indeed, hath deserved the death which he has doubtless sustained."

"My lord," stammered Pearson, "since your Excellency has found I am right in suspending your order in so many instances, I trust you will not blame me in this also—I thought it best to await more special orders."

"Thou art in a mighty merciful humour this morning, Pearson," said Cromwell, not entirely satisfied.

"If your Excellency please, the halter is ready, and so is the provost-marshal."

"Nay, if such a bloody fellow as thou hast spared him, it would ill become me to destroy him," said the General. "But then, here is among Rochecliffe's papers the engagement of twenty desperadoes to take us off—some example ought to be made."

"My lord," said Zerobabel, "consider now how often this young man, Albert Lee, hath been near you, nay, probably, quite close to your Ex-

cellency, in these dark passages, which he knew, and we did not. Had he been of an assassin's nature, it would have cost him but a pistol-shot, and the light of Israel was extinguished. Nay, in the unavoidable confusion which must have ensued, the sentinels quitting their posts, he might have had a fair chance of escape."

"Enough, Zerobabel, he lives," said the General. "He shall remain in custody for some time, however, and be then banished from England. The other two are safe, of course; for you would not dream of considering such paltry fellows as fit victims for my revenge."

"One fellow, the under-keeper, called Joliffe, deserves death, however," said Pearson, "since he has frankly admitted that he slew honest Joseph Tomkins."

"He deserves a reward for saving us a labour," said Cromwell; "that Tomkins was a most double-hearted villain. I have found evidence among these papers here, that if we had lost the fight at Worcester, we should have had reason to regret that we had ever trusted Master Tomkins—it was only our success which anticipated his treachery

—write us down debtor, not creditor, to Joceline, an you call him so, and to his quarter-staff."

"There remains the sacrilegious and graceless cavalier who attempted your Excellency's life last night," said Pearson.

"Nay," said the General, "that were stooping too low for revenge. His sword had no more power than had he thrusted with a tobacco-pipe. Eagles stoop not at mallards, or wild-drakes either."

"Yet, sir," said Pearson, "the fellow should be punished as a libeller. The quantity of foul and pestilential abuse which we found in his pockets makes me loath he should go altogether free —Please to look at them, sir."

"A most vile hand," said Oliver, as he looked at a sheet or two of our friend Wildrake's poetical miscellanies—"The very hand-writing seems to be drunk, and the poetry not very sober—What have we here?

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad—
If e'er I do well, 'tis a wonder—

Why, what trash is this?—and then again—

Now, a plague on the poll
Of old politic Noll.
We will drink till we bring
In triumph back the King.

In truth, if it could be done that way, this poet would be a stout champion. Give the poor knave five pieces, Pearson, and bid him go sell his ballads. If he come within twenty miles of our person though, we will have him flogged till the blood runs down to his heels."

"There remains only one sentenced person," said Pearson, "a noble wolf-hound, finer than any your Excellency saw in Ireland. He belongs to the old knight Sir Henry Lee. Should your Excellency not desire to keep the fine creature yourself, might I presume to beg that I might have leave?"

"No, Pearson," said Cromwell; "the old man, so faithful himself, shall not be deprived of his faithful dog.—I would *I* had any creature, were it but a dog, that followed me because it loved me, not for what it could make of me."

"Your Excellency is unjust to your faithful soldiers," said Zerobabel, bluntly, "who follow

you like dogs, fight for you like dogs, and have the grave of a dog on the spot where they happen to fall."

"How now, old grumbler," said the General, "what means this change of note?"

"Corporal Humgudgeon's remains are left to moulder under the ruins of yonder tower, and Tomkins is thrust into a hole in a thicket like a beast."

"True, true," said Cromwell, "they shall be removed to the churchyard, and every soldier shall attend with cockades of sea-green and blue ribbon—Every one of the non-commissioned officers and the adjutators shall have a mourning-scarf, we ourselves will lead the procession, and there shall be a proper dole of wine, burnt brandy, and rosemary. See that it is done, Pearson. After the funeral, Woodstock shall be dismantled and destroyed, that its recesses may not again afford shelter to rebels and malignants."

The commands of the General were punctually obeyed, and when the other prisoners were dismissed, Albert Lee remained for some time in custody. He went abroad after his liberation, en-

tered in King Charles's Guards, where he was promoted by that monarch. But his fate, as we shall see hereafter, only allowed him a short though bright career.

We return to the liberation of the other prisoners from Woodstock. The two divines, completely reconciled to each other, retreated arm in arm to the parsonage-house, formerly the residence of Dr Rochecliffe, but which he now visited as the guest of his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough. The Presbyterian had no sooner installed his friend under his roof, than he urged upon him an offer to partake it, and the income annexed to it, as his own. Dr Rochecliffe was much affected, but wisely rejected the generous offer, considering the difference of their tenets on Church government, which each entertained as religiously as his creed. Another debate, though a light one, on the subject of the office of Bishops in the Primitive Church, confirmed him in his resolution. They parted the next day, and their friendship remained undisturbed by controversy till Mr Holdenough's death, in 1568; a harmony which might be in some degree owing to their never meeting again after

their imprisonment. Doctor Rochecliffe was restored to his living after the Restoration, and ascended from thence to high clerical preferment.

The inferior personages of the grand gaol-delivery at Woodstock Lodge easily found themselves temporary accommodations in the town among old acquaintance; but no one ventured to entertain the old knight, understood to be so much under the displeasure of the ruling powers; and even the innkeeper of the George, who had been one of his tenants, scarce dared to admit him to the common privileges of a traveller, who has food and lodging for his money. Everard attended him unrequested, unpermitted, but also unforbidden. The heart of the old man had been turned once more towards him when he learned how he had behaved at the memorable rencontre at the King's Oak, and saw that he was an object of the enmity, rather than the favour, of Cromwell. But there was another secret feeling which tended to reconcile him to his nephew—the consciousness that Everard shared with him the deep anxiety which he experienced on account of his daughter, who was not yet returned from her doubtful and perilous expe-

dition. He felt that he himself would perhaps be unable to discover where Alice had taken refuge during the late events, or to obtain her deliverance if she was taken into custody. He wished Everard to offer him his service in making a search for her, but shame prevented his preferring the request; and Everard, who could not suspect the altered state of his uncle's mind, was afraid to make the proposal of assistance, or even to name the name of Alice.

The sun had already set—they sate looking each other in the face in silence, when the trampling of horses was heard—there was knocking at the door—there was a light step on the stair, and Alice, the subject of their anxiety, stood before them. She threw herself joyfully into her father's arms, who glanced his eye heedfully round the room, as he said in a whisper, "Is all safe?"

"Safe and out of danger, as I trust," replied Alice—"I have a token for you."

Her eye then rested on Everard—she blushed, was embarrassed, and silent.

"You need not fear your presbyterian cousin," said the knight with a good-humoured smile, "he

has himself proved a confessor at least for loyalty, and ran the risk of being a martyr."

She pulled from her bosom the royal rescript, written on a small and soiled piece of paper, and tied round with a worsted thread instead of a seal. Such as it was, Sir Henry ere he opened it pressed the little packet with oriental veneration to his lips, to his heart, to his forehead; and it was not before a tear had dropt on it that he found courage to open and read the billet. It was in these words:—

"LOYAL OUR MUCH ESTEEMED FRIEND, OUR TRUSTY SUBJECT,

"It having become known to us that a purpose of marriage has been entertained betwixt Mrs Alice Lee, your only daughter, and Markham Everard, Esq. of Eversely Chase, her kinsman, and by affiancy your nephew: And being assured that this match would be highly agreeable to you, had it not been for certain respects to our service, which induced you to refuse your consent thereto—We do therefore acquaint you, that far from our affairs suffering by such an alliance, we

do exhort, and, so far as we may, require you to consent to the same, as you would wish to do us good pleasure, and greatly to advance our affairs. Leaving to you, nevertheless, as becometh a Christian King, the full exercise of your own discretion concerning other obstacles to such an alliance, which may exist, independent of those connected with our service. Witness our hand, together with our thankful recollections of your good services to our late Royal Father as well as ourselves,

C. R."

Long and steadily did Sir Henry gaze on the letter, so that it might almost seem as if he were getting it by heart. He then placed it carefully in his pocket-book, and asked Alice the account of her adventures of the preceding night. They were briefly told. Their midnight walk through the Chase had been speedily and safely accomplished. When she had seen Charles and his attendant set off, she had taken some repose in the cottage where they parted. With the morning came news that Woodstock was occupied by soldiers, so that return thither might have led to

danger, suspicion, and inquiry. Alice therefore did not attempt it, but went to a house in the neighbourhood, inhabited by a lady of established loyalty, whose husband had been major of Sir Henry Lee's regiment, and had fallen at the battle of Naseby. Mrs Aylmer was a sensible woman, and indeed the necessities of the singular times had sharpened every one's faculties for stratagem and intrigue. She sent a faithful servant to scout about the mansion at Woodstock, who no sooner saw the prisoners dismissed and in safety, and ascertained the knight's destination for the evening, than he carried the news to his mistress, and by her orders attended Alice on horseback to join her father.

There was seldom, perhaps, an evening meal made in such absolute silence as by this embarrassed party, each occupied with their own thoughts, and at a loss how to fathom those of the others. At length the hour came when Alice felt herself at liberty to retire to repose after a day so fatiguing. Everard handed her to the door of her apartment, and was then himself about to take leave, when, to his surprise, his uncle asked him to return,

pointed to a chair, and giving him the King's letter to read, fixed his looks on him steadily during the perusal; determined that if he could discover aught short of the utmost delight in the reading, the commands of the King himself should be disobeyed, rather than Alice should be sacrificed to one who received not her hand as the greatest blessing earth had to bestow. But the features of Everard indicated joyful hope, even beyond what the father could have anticipated, yet mingled with surprise; and when he raised his eye to the knight's with timidity and doubt, a smile was on Sir Henry's countenance as he broke silence. "The King," he said, "had he no other subject in England, should dispose at will of those of the house of Lee. But methinks the family of Everard have not been so devoted of late to the crown as to comply with a mandate, inviting its heir to marry the daughter of a beggar."

"The daughter of Sir Henry Lee," said Everard, kneeling to his uncle, and perforce kissing his hand, "would grace the house of a Duke."

"The girl is well enough," said the knight proudly; "for myself, my poverty shall neither

shame nor encroach on my friends. Some few pieces I have by Dr Rochcliffe's kindness, and Joceline and I will strike out something."

"Nay, my dear uncle, you are richer than you think for," said Everard. "That part of your estate, which my father redeemed for payment of a moderate composition, is still your own, and held by trustees in your name, myself being one of them. You are only our debtor for an advance of moneys, for which, if it will content you, we will count with you like usurers. My father is incapable of profiting by making a bargain on his own account for the estate of a distressed friend; and all this you would have learned long since, but that you would not—I mean time did not serve for explanation—I mean——"

"You mean I was too hot to hear reason, Mark, and I believe it is very true. But I think we ununderstand each other *now*. To-morrow I go with my family to Kingston, where is an old house I may still call mine. Come hither at thy leisure, Mark—or thy best speed, as thou wilt—but come with thy father's consent."

"With my father in person," said Everard, "if you will permit."

"Be that," answered the knight, "as he and you will—I think Joceline will scarce shut the door in thy face, or Bevis growl as he did after poor Louis Kerneguy.—Nay, no more raptures, but good night, Mark, good night; and if thou art not tired with the fatigue of yesterday—why, if you appear here at seven in the morning, I think we must bear with your company on the Kingston road."

Once more Everard pressed the knight's hand, caressed Bevis, who received his kindness graciously, and went home to dreams of happiness, which were realized, so far as this motley world permits, within a few months afterwards.

CHAPTER XIV.

——— My life was of a piece,
Spent in your service—dying at your feet.
Don Sebastian.

Years rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed; and yet Time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

After the marriage of Alice and Markham Everard, the old knight resided near them, in an ancient manor-house belonging to the redeemed portion of his estate, where Joceline and Phœbe, now man and wife, with one or two domestics, regulated the affairs of his household. When he

tired of Shakspeare and solitude, he was ever a welcome guest at his son-in-law's, where he went the more frequently that Markham had given up all concern in public affairs, disapproving of the forcible dismissal of the Parliament, and submitting to Cromwell's subsequent domination, rather as that which was the lesser evil, than as to a government which he regarded as legal. Cromwell seemed ever willing to show himself his friend; but Everard, resenting highly the proposal to deliver up the King, which he considered as an insult to his honour, never answered such advances, and became, on the contrary, of the opinion, which was now generally prevalent in the nation, that a settled government could not be obtained without the recall of the banished family. There is no doubt, that the personal kindness which he had received from Charles, rendered him the more readily disposed to such a measure. He was peremptory, however, in declining all engagements during Oliver's life, whose power he considered as too firmly fixed to be shaken by any plots which could be formed against it.

Meantime, Wildrake continued to be Everard's protected dependent as before, though sometimes the connexion tended not a little to his inconvenience. That respectable person, indeed, while he remained stationary in his patron's house, or that of the old knight, discharged many little duties in the family, and won Alice's heart by his attention to the children, teaching the boys, of whom they had three, to ride, fence, toss the pike, and many similar exercises; and, above all, filling up a great blank in her father's existence, with whom he played at chess and back-gammon, or read Shakspeare, or was clerk to prayers when any sequestrated divine ventured to read the service of the Church. Or he found game for him while the old gentleman continued to go a sporting; and, especially, he talked over the storming of Brentford, and the battles of Edgehill, Banbury, Roundway-down, and others; themes which the aged cavalier delighted in, but which he could not so well enter upon with Colonel Everard, who had gained his laurels in the Parliament service.

The assistance which he received from Wild-

rake's society became more necessary, after Sir Henry was deprived of his gallant and only son, who was slain in the fatal battle of Dunkirk, where, unhappily, English colours were displayed on both the contending sides, the French being then allied with Oliver, who sent to their aid a body of auxiliaries, and the troops of the banished King fighting in behalf of the Spaniards. Sir Henry received the melancholy news like an old man, that is, with more external composure than could have been anticipated. He dwelt for weeks and months on the lines forwarded by the indefatigable Doctor Rochcliffe, superscribed in small letters, C. R., and subscribed Louis Kerneguy, in which the writer conjured him to endure this inestimable loss with the greater firmness, that he had still left one son, (intimating himself,) who would always regard him as a father.

But in despite of this balsam, sorrow acting imperceptibly, and sucking the blood like a vampyre, seemed gradually drying up the springs of life; and, without any formed illness, or outward complaint, the old man's strength and vigour

gradually abated, and the ministry of Wildrake proved daily more indispensable.

It was not, however, always to be had. The cavalier was one of those happy persons whom a strong constitution, an unreflecting mind, and exuberant spirits, enable to play through their whole lives the part of a school-boy—happy for the moment, and careless of consequences.

Once or twice every year, when he had collected a few pieces, the Cavaliero Wildrake made a start to London, where, as he described it, he went on the ramble, drank as much wine as he could come by, and led a *skeldering* life, to use his own phrase, among roystering cavaliers like himself, till by some rash speech, or wild action, he got into the Marshalsea, the Fleet, or some other prison, from which he was to be delivered at the expense of interest, money, and sometimes a little reputation.

At length Cromwell died, his son resigned the government, and the various changes which followed induced Everard, as well as many others, to adopt more active measures in the King's behalf. Everard even remitted considerable sums

for his service, but with the utmost caution, and corresponding with no intermediate agent, but with the Chancellor himself, to whom he communicated much useful information upon public affairs. With all his prudence he was very nearly engaged in the ineffectual rising of Booth and Middleton in the west, and with great difficulty escaped from the fatal consequences of that ill-timed attempt. After this, although the estate of the kingdom was trebly unsettled, yet no card seemed to turn up favourable to the royal cause, until the movement of General Monk from Scotland. Even then, it was when at the point of complete success, that the fortunes of Charles seemed at a lower ebb than ever, especially when intelligence had arrived at the little Court which he then kept in Brussels, that Monk, on arriving in London, had put himself under the orders of the Parliament.

It was at this time, and in the evening, while the King, Buckingham, Wilmot, and some other gallants of his wandering Court, were engaged in a convivial party, that the Chancellor (Clarendon) suddenly craved audience, and, entering with less

ceremony than he would have done at another time, announced extraordinary news. For the messenger, he said, he could say nothing, saving that he appeared to have drunk much and slept little; but that he had brought a sure token of credence from a man for whose faith he would venture his life. The King demanded to see the messenger himself.

A man entered, with something the manners of a gentleman, and more those of a rakehelly debauchee—his eyes swelled and inflamed—his gait disordered and stumbling, partly through lack of sleep, partly through the means he had taken to support his fatigue. He staggered without ceremony to the head of the table, seized the King's hand, which he mumbled like a piece of gingerbread; while Charles, who began to recollect him from his mode of salutation, was not very much pleased that their meeting should have taken place before so many witnesses.

"I bring good news," said the uncouth messenger, "glorious news!—the King shall enjoy his own again!—My feet are beautiful on the mountains. Gad, I have lived with Presbyterians till I have caught their language—but we

are all one man's children now—all your Majesty's poor babes. The Rump is all ruined in London—bonfires flaming, music playing, rumps roasting, healths drinking, London in a blaze of light from the Strand to Rotherhithe—tankards clattering——"

"We can guess at that," said the Duke of Buckingham.

"My old friend Mark Everard sent me off with the news—I'm a villain if I've slept since. Your Majesty recollects me, I am sure. Your Majesty remembers, sa—sa—at the King's Oak, at Woodstock?—

> 'O, we'll dance, and sing, and play,
> For 'twill be a joyous day
> When the King shall enjoy his own again.'"

"Master Wildrake, I remember you well," said the King. "I trust the good news is certain?"

"Certain! your Majesty; did I not hear the bells?—did I not see the bon-fires?—did I not drink your Majesty's health so often, that my legs would scarce carry me to the wharf? It is as certain as that I am poor Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln."

The Duke of Buckingham here whispered to the King, "I have always suspected your Majesty kept odd company during the escape from Worcester, but this seems a rare sample."

"Why, pretty much like yourself, and other company I have kept here so many years—as stout a heart, as empty a head," said Charles—"as much lace, though somewhat tarnished, as much brass on the brow, and nearly as much copper in the pocket."

"I would your Majesty would intrust this messenger of good news with me, to get the truth out of him," said Buckingham.

"Thank your grace," replied the King; "but he has a will as well as yourself, and such seldom agree. My Lord Chancellor hath wisdom, and to that we must trust ourselves.—Master Wildrake, you will go with my Lord Chancellor, who will bring us a report of your tidings; meantime, I assure you that you shall be no loser for being the first messenger of good news." So saying, he gave a signal to the Chancellor to take away Wildrake, whom he judged, in his present humour, to be not unlikely to communi-

cate some former passages at Woodstock, which might rather entertain than edify the wits of his court.

Corroboration of the joyful intelligence soon arrived, and Wildrake was presented with a handsome gratuity and small pension, which, by the King's special desire, had no duty whatever attached to it.

Shortly afterwards, all England was engaged in chorussing his favourite ditty—

Oh, the twenty-ninth of May,
It was a glorious day,
When the King shall enjoy his own again.

On that memorable day, the King prepared to make his progress from Rochester to London, with a reception on the part of his subjects so unanimously cordial, as made him say gaily, it must have been his own fault to stay so long away from a country where his arrival gave so much joy. On horseback, betwixt his brothers, the Dukes of York and Glocester, the Restored Monarch trod slowly over roads strewn with flowers—by conduits running wine, under triumphal arches, and through streets hung with tapestry. There were the citizens in various bands, some arrayed in coats

of black velvet, with gold chains; some in military suits of cloth of gold, or cloth of silver, followed by all those craftsmen, who, having hooted the father from Whitehall, were now come to shout the son into possession of his ancestral palace. On his progress through Blackheath, he passed that army, which, so long formidable to England herself, as well as to Europe, had been the means of restoring the Monarchy, which their own hands had destroyed. As the King passed the last files of this formidable host, he came to an open part of the heath, where many persons of quality, with others of inferior rank, had stationed themselves to gratulate him as he passed towards the capital.

There was one group, however, which attracted peculiar attention from those around, on account of the respect shown to the party by the soldiers who kept the ground, and who, whether Cavaliers or Roundheads, seemed to contest emulously which should contribute most to their accommodation; for both the elder and younger gentlemen of the party had been distinguished in the Civil War.

It was a family group, of which the principal figure was an old man seated in a chair, having a complacent smile on his face, and a tear swelling to his eye, as he saw the banners wave on in interminable succession, and heard the multitude shouting the long silenced acclamation, "God save King Charles!" His cheek was ashy pale, and his long beard bleached like the thistle down; his blue eye was cloudless, yet it was obvious that its vision was failing. His motions were feeble, and he spoke little, except when he answered the prattle of his grand-children, or asked a question at his daughter, who sate beside him, matured in matronly beauty, or at Colonel Everard, who stood behind. There too the stout yeoman, Joceline Joliffe, still in his sylvan dress, leaned, like a second Benaiah, on the quarter-staff that had done the King good service in its day, and his wife, a buxom matron as she had been a pretty maiden, laughed at her own consequence; and ever and anon joined her shrill notes to the stentorian halloo which her husband added to the general exclamation.

Three fine boys and two pretty girls prattled

around their grandfather, who made them such answers as suited their age, and repeatedly passed his withered hand over the fair locks of the little darlings, while Alice, assisted by Wildrake (blazing in a splendid dress, and his eyes washed with only a single cup of canary), took off the children's attention from time to time, lest they should weary their grandfather. We must not omit one other remarkable figure in the group—a gigantic dog, which bore the signs of being at the extremity of canine life, being perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old. But though exhibiting but the ruin of his former appearance, his eyes dim, his joints stiff, his head slouched down, and his gallant carriage and graceful motions exchanged for a stiff, rheumatic, hobbling gait, the noble hound had lost none of his instinctive fondness for his master. To lie by Sir Henry's feet in the sun in summer or by the fire in winter, to raise his head to look on him, to lick his withered hand or his shrivelled cheek from time to time, seemed now all that Bevis lived for.

Three or four livery-servants attended to protect this group from the thronging multitude;

but it needed not. The high respectability and unpretending simplicity of their appearance gave them, even in the eyes of the coarsest of the people, an air of patriarchal dignity, which commanded general regard; and they sat upon the bank which they had chosen for their station by the way-side, as undisturbed as if they had been in their own park.

And now the distant clarions announced the Royal Presence. Onward came pursuivant and trumpet—onward came plumes and cloth of gold, and waving standards displayed, and swords gleaming to the sun; and at length, heading a group of the noblest in England, and supported by his royal brothers on either side, onward came King Charles. He had already halted more than once, in kindness perhaps as well as policy, to exchange a word with persons whom he recognized among the spectators, and the shouts of the by-standers applauded a courtesy which seemed so well timed. But when he had gazed an instant on the party we have described, it was impossible, if even Alice had been too much changed to be recognized, not instantly to know Bevis and his venerable master. The Monarch sprung from his

horse, and walked instantly up to the old knight, amid thundering acclamations which rose from the multitudes around, when they saw Charles with his own hand oppose the feeble attempts of the old man to rise to do him homage. Gently replacing him on his seat—" Bless," he said, " father—bless your son, who has returned in safety, as you blessed him when he departed in danger."

" May God bless—and preserve"—muttered the old man, overcome by his feelings; and the King, to give him a few moments' repose, turned to Alice—

" And you," he said, " my fair guide, how have you been employed since our perilous night-walk? But I need not ask," glancing round—" in the service of King and Kingdom, bringing up subjects as loyal as their ancestors.—A fair lineage, by my faith, and a beautiful sight to the eye of an English King!—Colonel Everard, we shall see you, I trust, at Whitehall?" Here he nodded to Wildrake. " And thou, Joceline, thou canst hold thy quarter-staff with one hand, sure?—Thrust forward the other palm."

Looking down in sheer bashfulness, Joceline, like a bull about to push, extended to the King, over his lady's shoulder, a hand as broad and hard as a wooden trencher, which the King filled with gold coins. "Buy a head-gear for my friend Phœbe with some of these," said Charles; "she too has been doing her duty to Old England."

The King then turned once more to the knight, who seemed making an effort to speak. He took his aged hand in both his own, and stooped his head towards him to catch his accents, while the old man, detaining him with the other hand, said something faltering, of which Charles could only catch the quotation—

> Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,
> And welcome home again discarded faith.

Extricating himself, therefore, as gently as possible, from a scene which began to grow painfully embarrassing, the good-natured King said, speaking with unusual distinctness to insure the old man's comprehending him, "This is something too public a place for all we have to say. But if you come not soon to see King Charles at Whitehall, he will send down Louis Kerneguy to visit

you, that you may see how rational he is become since his travels."

So saying, he once more pressed affectionately the old man's hand, bowed to Alice and all around, and withdrew; Sir Henry Lee listening with a smile, which showed he comprehended the gracious tendency of what had been said. The old man leaned back on his seat, and muttered the *Nunc dimittis.*

"Excuse me for having made you wait, my lords," said the King, as he mounted his horse; "had it not been for these good folks, you might have waited for me long enough.—Move on, sirs."

The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent while the King stopped; while the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice's anxiety about her father's health was for a moment suspended, while her eye followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath. When she looked again at Sir Henry, she was startled to see that his cheek, which had gained some colour during his conver-

sation with the King, had relapsed into earthy paleness; that his eyes were closed, and opened not again; and that his features expressed, amid their quietude, a rigidity which is not that of sleep. They ran to his assistance, but it was too late. The light that burned so low in the socket, had leaped up, and expired, in one exhilarating flash.

The rest must be conceived. I have only to add, that his faithful dog did not survive him many days; and that the image of Bevis lies carved at his Master's feet, on the tomb which was erected to the Memory of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley.

THE END.

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